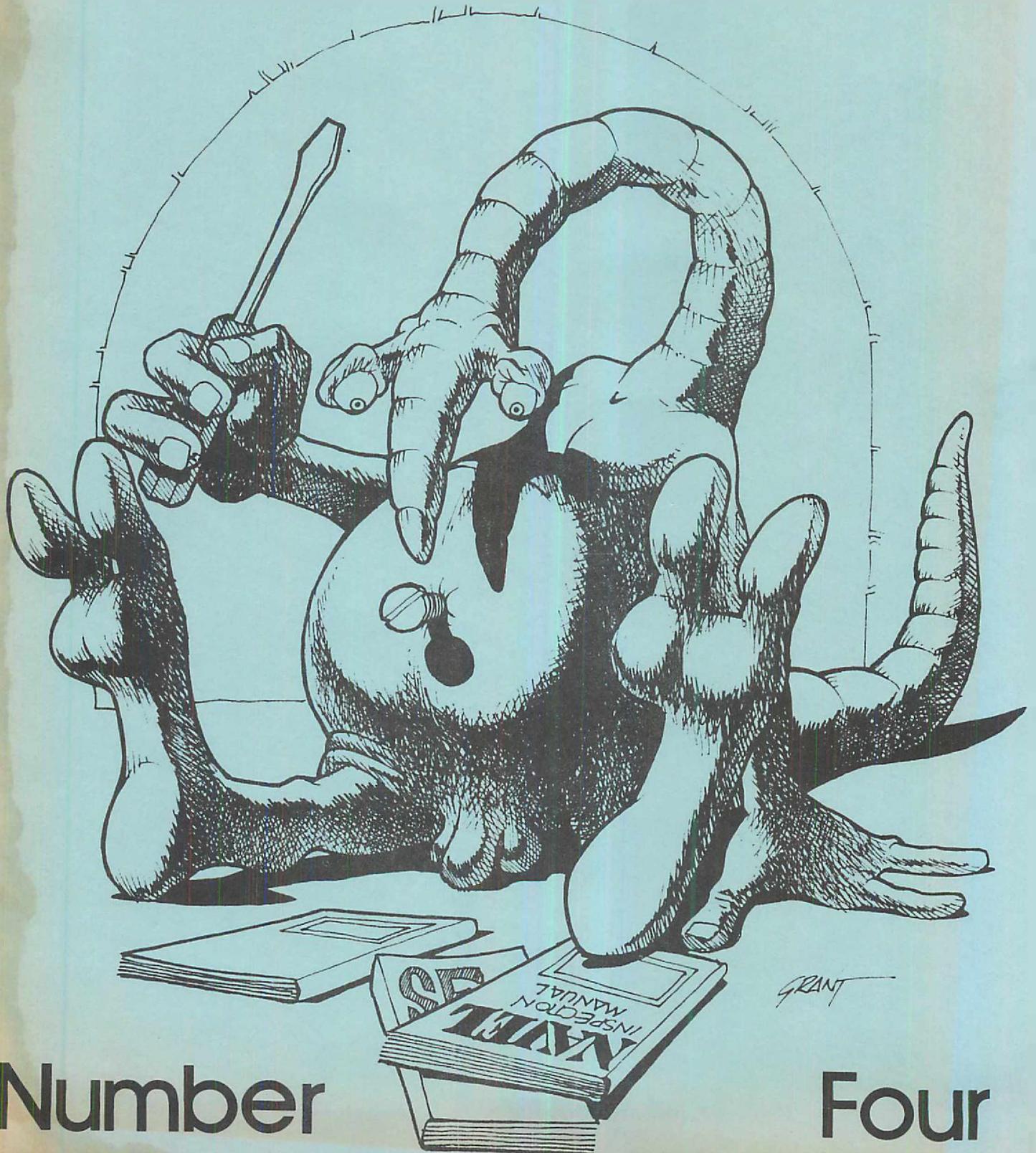


# THE ALIEN CRITIC

An Unconventional Science Fiction Journal



Number

Four



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9-20-72 to 1-11-73

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PLEASE SEND YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS IF YOU MOVE.

KAISER-FRAZIER MEET THE S.F. MAN or K.F.O.G. IS NOT A RADIO STATION or MY GHOD, I'VE BEEN TO A CONVENTION AND DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT!

9-20-72

It all began, sayeth I with glazed eye and palsied hand, with an invitation from my one true friend in Portland, Jim Rise von Richter (A stern-eyed Prussian with a fierce beard and mustache who is forty pounds overweight and lamentably pear-shaped) to take a small long-weekend vacation to Aberdeen and Seattle with him and his wife, Delores.

He wanted to visit his boyhood town (Aberdeen), inspect some property he had inherited there, and go on to Seattle for a Kaiser Frazier Owners Club meet.

Rashly, never having seen Seattle (or Aberdeen!) I decided to take up space in the back of his copper colored Dodge Charger.

Friday at Noon or so he vroomed to my door. I got in with my stuffed zip bag and we vroomed across the Columbia river, through Vancouver, heading north.

Suddenly—pop...hissssssssss....ka-thubbery, thubbery, thubbery, thubbery..... Delores, (a pretty woman with a lead foot) brought us to the side of the freeway.

Ranting and cursing at the shoddy workmanship of modern Amerikan workers and defective wide-oval tires, Jim (with my meagre left-handed assistance) changed over to his spare, a terrifyingly smooth thing that looked like it had five hundred feet of wear left on it.

We continued at a mere 60 mph, waiting for the horrible inevitable.

Weirdly, that old smoothie held up <sup>for</sup> the whole trip.

Jim's property is 6 lots in a wooded section of Aberdeen, and it is mostly steep slope down from the road. He thinks his great granddaddy may have bought it because there may be oil 2,000 feet down.

We looked around Aberdeen, a shabby old town down on its luck—once a great shipping port (before the Columbia was opened up by dredging), now a dying, marginal lumber center whose mills are being phased out. But there are some new buildings, a new bank, etc. There's hope.

Seattle may be hurting because of Boeing's troubles, but it sure doesn't show it...to a casual observer. That's a big city, people. And the downtown section is twice the size of the Los Angeles downtown. (Ah, but L.A. downtown is inferior to that of Beverly Hills, which glitters a few miles west.)

Saturday morning we went to a park...um...Woodlawn Park, I think, and there I had my first inkling of what K.F.O.C. means. There, lined up in one thirty four car row, were the heart-throbs, the pampered pets, the perverted passions of 34 old car freaks—Kaisers, Fraziers, Willys and three lovely Darrins. (Also a 1920ish car whose name escapes me but which is permitted to belong because the manufacturer was taken over by Frazier...who used some dies and presses to make the first Kaisers and Fraziers ((Is that Frazer? Forgive me, Jim, I know not what I do)) and so, too, are the Henry J little cars and the Willys cars included in the club as poor relations.

The Darrins are expensive, low-slung, fibre-glass bodied, convertible-topped, sliding-doored, sports cars designed by

Darrin, who designed the Kaisers and Fraziers. The Darrins are rare, have an odd triangular grill, and are true head-turners; all were in neat condition.

The K's and F's ranged from eyesores to mint condition; two of the Kaiser Dragons were beautiful; one of the owner's kept his awards and trophies on display in his open trunk. (The hoods all were up, too, and the engines were immaculate.) Judging is based on how close the restoration is to the Original. (Much contempt was expressed for the lax, un-Original standards used in the K-F National Meet last year in a Disneyland hotel parking lot.)

Saturday there was a pot-luck picnic (Ummm! gobble-gobble, slurp, slurp, guzzle, chomp, chew—"Hey, these meatballs are good!") and a business meeting—where and when they have the next meet in the Northwest and who was going to be stuck as Host...and also, "C'mon you guys, fork over for subscriptions to the club zine, THE TRAVELER."

Then trophies and Awards were given—mostly amusing: LATE COMER award, NCST UN-ORIGINAL, FIRST COMER award, THE WORST RATTLER, an award for the owner who had come to greatest distance, and etc.

Throughout, much talk about interior decor, the difficulty of finding spare parts, etc.

That night after a dinner break of several hours, open house at two Seattle owners' homes. I walked into one such and was crogged at its resemblance to a certified sf fan's home—only the subject of the paintings and books and assorted memorabilia is changed. Try to imagine Bruce Pelz's Tower devoted to old cars...the same fascinating littered state of existence.

Sunday another line-up of old cars at a Puget Sound park, a Club-funded free lunch, an auction ("Seventy-five cents for this Kaiser Manhattan door handle. Do I hear a dollar?"), a visit by an owner of a 1920ish car (I can't for the life of me remember the make) which was in excellent restored condition with flower holders in the back seat area, and a good sit-up with headroom space... In fact, I was impressed with the Kaisers and Fraziers and other old cars because of their roominess and their sturdy bumpers. Great old in-line engines.

After the meet we went to see the Space Needle. Impressive as hell at night from below. A SWIFT outside elevator ride to the top. Watch Seattle come alight from the Space Needle, folk. It's something else. Have a drink in the slowly turning restaurant. Make the drink last one revolution if you can.

The observation deck is a bit bare and hucksterish with its series of tourist junkshops (mementoes: dishes, "Space Needle"pens, etc.), dime telescopes, junk foods. The outdoor walk around with its solid wall and glass fence on top of that is still scary (Death Wish, get thee behind me!) (and psychological manipulation—a triple line of labeled electrified wires on the outside of the outer rail, above the girders that form the outer limits of the superstructure.)

But a determined person could jump successfully if he or she wished.

The next day, Monday, on the way back, while going through Olympia, Jim spotted a 1937 LaSalle, maroon, a

coupe, and with the indefatigable lust of a true old car nut, checked out nearby shops for the owner of the old beauty. And found him—a movie house owner who obligingly gave us a ride in it (the jump seats in back of the main, front seat were pull-downs from the side—riders sat facing each other. Big car! In-line eight as I recall, and big, tough bumpers.

(Why Detroit has to spend millions of dollars in order to put decent bumpers on new cars is a study in sham—they had the technology and know-how all worked out in the Thirties; can't they dig out the old plans? But "cosmetic" bumpers and the beautifully profitable replacement market for fender-grill-headlight-trunk-hood panels have become too obviously a designed-in racket for fleecing the public. Now they act as if a good bumper was a tremendous project, almost an impossibility because "the public" won't accept "unsightly" protection. It's all bullshit.)

Jim owns 17 old cars, among them a 1937 LaSalle sedan (which explains his ecstasy at seeing a matching coupe), a Kaiser, a Fraser, a classic Lincoln Continental, and etc.

He is also an old airplane nut, but hasn't started collecting them yet.

Anyway, coming into Portland, on Union Avenue, he saw an old "boat tailed" Rolls Royce on a trailer, stripped down to its bare frame and part of a restored silver body. We HAD to stop and be ravished, of course.

I was impressed by the huge in-line engine (with two spark plugs per cylinder) and the steel girders that formed the basic frame! Shit, that car could ram through a house and come out in good shape! I remember the Rolls was a Phaeton. No wonder those cars last a couple lifetimes.

Then—finally—home.

This was an interesting four days. I can understand the old car freak, but I don't share the disease. I suppose they can understand sf freaks...but don't share our strain of the virus.

And Jim told me each old car has its own club, with thousands of members nationwide. Packards, Studebakers, Hudsons, etc. And they each have Meets (conventions) and give achievement Awards....

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THE ACCUMULATED MAIL

9-20-72

The Book of the Month Club wants me to order a book or get out! Yassah, suh, I's goin'....

Mike Bailey and Brent MacLean, Canadians, passed through Portland and looked in the phone book to give me a call, but found other Geis names, and not me. Yes, I am not listed. Our phone is under my mother's dead husband's name...not a Geis name.

Mike said of the L.A. Worldcon: "It was my first Worldcon, so I have nothing with which to compare it. The fans themselves were interesting. A large number of them were either ectomorphs or endomorphs, most being endomorphs. ((Pity the poor mesomorph—so few have the blessings of being sf fans.)) Once I thought it could have been a convention of fat girls. Dress ran the gamut from Hippie to Ray Bradbury immaculate. It was quite a departure from the photographs that appear in the Advent Proceedings publications."

Marjorie A. Nab reports in passing, "Today the local papers report from Kit Carson County ((in Colorado)) that some farm people have seen a glowing object big as a barn and emitting rays. Last week a similar object was reported in Colby, Kansas. Keep a look out in Portland — someone may be watching us make jackasses out of ourselves again."

Karen Rockov, editor of UNICORN, retorts: "Oh, dear. And to think I was one of those who prayed for Alter-Ego's Second Coming. Stick him back in the closet.

"I don't want to argue with you about UNICORN. You think what you want to think and lots of luck. However, I am cut to the quick by your use of the word 'pretentious'. I suspect we use the same dictionary, so that can't be the problem. I regard pretentiousness as a cardinal sin in writing (as in life) and have always tried my best to write and select honest prose for UNICORN. Also, I have never considered UNICORN a fanzine, although it bears a great many similarities. Three quarters of our readers don't even know what a fanzine is. I like to think that our technical standards are higher.

((Oh. Okay. As a nicely produced "little magazine" I would rate it about 8 on a 10 scale, judging by your intent and execution. It is simply not my cup of literary tea.))

"As for the 'whimsical fantasy' — did you actually read the magazine? I suppose some people find Dorothy Sayers bibliographies, memoirs of C. S. Lewis' last days and obituaries for dead dogs whimsical, but I'm not one of them. And your crack about 'girl editors' — smile when you say that."

((Actually I was thinking of the whimsical Tim Kirk cartoon cover, the four-page article on the limericks of Edward Lear, and "A Primer of Demonology or Who's Who in the Other Place," with light-hearted illos. I'm smiling.))

"One final word. I'm sorry to disappoint you but UNICORN is going triennial. There will be many more issues. I propose the following escape clause for you. Since you seem to dislike the magazine so much and since I'm not exactly wild about your reviewing tactics (I've always held, perhaps unjustly, that a reviewer should actually read the magazine he reviews, then try to give his readers some clear idea of its contents),((Idealist!)) I'll let you decide whether you want to receive further issues. I wouldn't want to cause you any additional pain by foisting copies on you."

((The decision is yours, m'dear. I'll trade one-for-one, and much as I HATE YOUR MAGAZINE WITH A HATE THAT BOILS MY BLOOD AND—"Control yourself, Geis!" Yes, yes, Alter, you are right. C-o-n-t-r-o-l. As a somewhat appalled subscriber noted re REG, it's good to receive and be reminded of other viewpoints EVEN IF THEY'RE WRONG AND STUPID AND—))

"As for REG, I suspect that it is a valuable document in abnormal psychology, although most of your personal revelations are not particularly interesting for the general reader. As a complete layman in such matters I can only wonder why you choose to publicize the secret recesses of your soul. I have always been a very private person and could never bear to admit anyone, much less total strangers, into my inner thoughts. Perhaps your way out is easier, perhaps it is therapeutic. But how can you keep your self-respect? ((Ah, if I were ashamed of what I am, I would be a suicide by now,

but I am utterly shameless and do not subscribe to having a soul. I am, among other sinful things, an atheist. I do not believe in Heaven or Hell, and being of unsound mind I am having fun while I am alive.)) I wonder how you will feel when you re-read the zines 5 or 10 years from now. ((I wonder, too. That's partly why I'm publishing them now.))

"I hope your Gestetner is recuperating."

((Gesty is fine now, and thanks you for your interest.))

Rubin Zar submitted four non-sf poems to the editor of SFR. I shall return them. I don't think Rubin is much of a poet, and wouldn't have liked them for SFR.

Growth Research Associates sounds respectable, don't it? Nup. It's a high class porno company. That means they charge double for their hardcore films and books.

The SF Book Club sent their "Things To Come" booklet and I note with shocked surprise that the October selection is a Bob Silverberg novel, THE SECOND TRIP, which I have missed in pb, hardcover and magazine! How could this be?

Pyramid sent me a copy of their fourth printing of Algis Budrys' THE FALLING TORCH (R2776, 95¢).

And I received two copies of KULDESAR by Richard Cowper from Doubleday. I compared the shipping labels on each book package, and aha! there are two stencils in their reviewers file for me at my new address. I'll write the Doubleday Publicity Director and see if I can do the impossible—get them to pull the duplicate stencil. I fear someone will get it wrong and pull both.

And three fanzines. A copy of FOCAL POINT, V3 N5; cover date July 1972, but my copy has been in the forwarding limbo of the P.O. for Ghod knows how many days or weeks.

A rare, lovely Ross Chamberlain fannish cover: comic book super hero style—Captain Focal Point battles the evil sercon thugs who are holding a pretty damsel in bondage. Excellent.

Inside material by Arnie Katz, Terry Carr, Calvin Demmon, John D. Berry and the readers who write letters.

It's a friendly, warm, in-group zine, for and about fans and fandom. Rate it 8½; Arnie knows where he's at and his aim is true. For Trades, contributions or 3/\$1.00.

FIAWOL#3 is also from Arnie Katz and this time in collaboration with his wife, Joyce. They live at 59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, NY 11201. FIAWOL costs 5/\$1.00.

FIAWOL is a fan/fandom oriented newszine. Personal interest items, amateur press news, club bits, convention gossip.... It's only as good as its sources. Rate it 7.

And from Stephen Goble is BURIED MOUNTAINS, a different fanzine of uncertain orientation—an odd mixture of material: Goble's policy is, "The basic idea...is that irreverence is sacred. If this works out well, perhaps I will get a cross between NATIONAL LAUNPOON and MAD."

It didn't work out, but the possibility lurks for future issues. Rating: 3. Stephen Goble, POB 4606, College Station, TX 77840. 50¢.

SEX, SEX, SEX....  
9-20-72

Two newspaper items: in South Africa, a young woman was fined over one hundred dollars for taking a nude picture of herself.

In Portland, Oregon, the leading (by far) newspaper, THE OREGONIAN, has decided as of now to not accept ads from 'Adults Only' theaters. The announcement said "This is a family newspaper, and we've been getting complaints."

A review-of-the-porno-scene article described in clinical terms what kind of plotless, erotic hardcore perversions were and are being screened...and that due to dwindling patronage, the porno shows are turning to live sex acts (intercourse, oral) and that in the future, to whip up lagging interest, live sex acts will go into lesbian/sado-maso/bestiality if they can get away with it. The police have arrested a few live acts, contending that a theater is a public place in the meaning of the law. The owners contend the opposite, that the customer knows in advance what he will see and what he is paying for, hence it is a consenting adults situation and within the new Oregon consenting adults sex law. There will be court tests.

I've got to break down and spend some money and check this porno scene out for you readers one of these days... Soon as I get REG #3 run off, collated, stapled and mailed. Two weeks.

THE MAIL, LATELY  
9-22-72

Ulf Westblom, former energetic agent for SFR in Sweden, praises REG in a post-card and advises of a COA: Riksbyuagen 10, S-161 49 Bromma, SWEDEN.

A letter from Helmut Pesch, excellent German artist, prominent German sf fan, whom I wrote to a few weeks ago and asked to illustrate my REG fiction...because his style has a raw, heroic realism I would want for my fiction. I offered to pay him a small amount per full page drawing (I wouldn't mess with putting small electrostenciled illos into typed stencils again. No way!).

But he's busy until later in the fall, and I have subsequently decided to stick to my NO ARTWORK EXCEPT THE COVER rule for a while longer. That is, until REG actually turns enough profit to allow me to use REG money for added frills. I'll be more sure of the situation around Spring of next year, I hope. REG is on the ragged edge of breaking even now.

A croggling letter from Mike Izak, a student of Bethany College, W.Va., where they have an sf class (seminar) in the department of Philosophy. He brought REG#1 to class to quote a review...and...the class started to discuss the magazine, my philosophy and arguments, life style....

The Mad Hermit has struck again!

Ah, yes... A letter I Never Finished Reading: "Hi Doll; I don't think you'll mind if I call you doll, will you—Cuz I know you love looking at pix of sexy curvy dolls, especially when they really show what they've got...."

(photo-offset copy on brown paper of hand-writ original)

A postcard from Tom Collins, editor/publisher of IS magazine. He wants me to do lots of short sf reviews for him in-

stead of one longer review as I did for my "The Alien Critic" column I started in IS:6. He writes, "I prefer to try and cover the field as long as I'm going to be carrying reviews. It's scarcely worth doing unless I'm gonna do it better than the rest of the toiling masses."

Hoo boy. Better than SPECULATION? Better than SF COMMENTARY? Better (incredible!) than SFR?! He would have to specialize completely in sf reviews and analysis and criticism. Do you want to print a 100 page IS every three months, Tom? Want to advertise in the promags and circularize the libraries? Get listed in all the subscription services? And etc? You'll get old before your time.

Turn back before it's too late.

I can't comply with his wish. I don't read all that much sf. Wish I did, but the time melts away each day. I put REG first; so REG will be the repository for most of my sf opinions.

---

TELEVISION      The MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW continues to be  
9-23-72      a very good real-life comedy. The BOB NEWMAN  
                 SHOW is a dud—sanitized upper middle class haw  
haw stuff, with Suzanne Pleshette wasted.

LAUGH-IN is its usual fast-paced sight-gag, one-liner diversion for people with nothing better to do or who want a relaxing hour of no-thought.

BILL COSBY is watchable for a while. SONNY & CHER are stuck in their format and it's wearing mighty thin.

MAUDE is a bit stiff and self-conscious, doesn't have quite the perfect blend of cast that ALL IN THE FAMILY has, but it's a funny, risk-taking show.

HAWAII FIVE-0 is repeating its high-tension, intriguing story structures again...and it'll be around at least another season.

THE PAUL LYNDE SHOW depends totally on his exaggerated schtick: funny the first few times, but wearying after that.

I watched THE MOD SQUAD once a couple years ago and never watched it again. Its success baffles me.

JIGSAW is low-grade Awful. FLIP WILSON is overrated; I tired of his drag queen and unfunny other characters early last season.

IRONSIDE is watchable only if a fine guest star is in an episode.

DEAN MARTIN continues his easy-going, blatant con of the public—who love him for it.

I have never watched THE BRADY BUNCH or THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY. Nor will I ever watch THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

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THE WAR      The ARVN finally took Quang Tri but gave up on  
9-24-72      clearing the highway to An Loc. The N Viets have  
                 compensated for our blockade and massive bombing.  
They are managing more and more rocket attacks on key military bases and pressuring district towns here and there while creeping back into control of more and more villages and hamlets.

Thieu comes on more and more obviously as an out and out dictator. Soon the situation will be back to its 1964 crisis stage.

That Vietnam—that's one hell of a tar baby.

THE MAIL      A fan magazine, WAREHOUSE #3, from D. Gary  
9-24-72      Grady, 520 Orange St., Wilmington, NC 28401, 25¢.  
                 Some fairly good book reviews. (Sorry, Gary, I  
just don't feel up to wiping out "The History of the Jones-  
apponker" by Ben and Mary Alice Jones. Why did you print  
it?! I'd much rather read more of your meandering editorial.)  
Rate it 3 and hope for a 5 next time.

The October N.A.L. NEWS. They steadfastly refuse to change my address in their file. I note they have a book scheduled, THE LIVING CLOCKS by Ritchie M. Ward, which is on the same subject as THE COSMIC CLOCKS of a few years ago and the Dover book, BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS IN HUMAN & ANIMAL PHYSIOLOGY by Gay Gaer Luce. ("It is now beginning to look as if much of our science and civilization is based on a false premise: that human beings are homeostatic, and are much the same at all times (apart from one or two accepted cycles, like daily temperature and the menstrual cycle). Within the past fifteen years, however, an enormous amount of material has been amassed showing that all life constitutes an incredibly complex intermeshing and coordination of cycles of various sorts, some fairly obvious, some fairly well concealed.")

There are probably a lot of good sf ideas waiting to be used in this new concept of man's inter-relationship with the subtle forces in the world.

Dover sent me a clutch of book brochures, by the way, in the hope I'd buy something. One such, besides describing the book mentioned above, touts a translation of THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM, which is a dead serious 15th century manual for witch hunters and gives, according to this write-up, all there is to know about the subject, including case histories.

Dover's address is 180 Varick St., New York, NY 10014. The witch book is \$3.95, the bio-rhythms book is \$2.50, both paperbound.

I'm "ordering" these books for review from the Dover Publicity Director. See if I get them.

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"Enough soul-baring. It hurts an awful lot."

—Norm Hochberg, BIG MAC #1

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST      Ah, I finally finished "Tomb  
9-24-72      It May Concern" today, between the  
                 Buffalo upset of the 49ers and the  
Detroit-Minnesota game. I estimate it reached about 20,000 words. The ending kept receding...

Now to start stenciling the last 15 ms pages and also run off all those REG #3 stencils.

The next entry may be two weeks away. I'm hoping, of course, for a few responses from the REG ads I put into the GALAXY/IF, AMAZING/FANTASTIC duos. The first is to be in the GALAXY that hits the stands on Monday, tomorrow. I'm a long way from having an issue ready that I can send out that fits the ads' promise of fiction.

To work, to work, the subscribers are coming (I hope!).

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The George McGovern doll—wind it up and it says it's behind you 1000% before it gives you the boot.

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THIS IS COLUMBUS DAY  
10-9-72

And I wonder what the man would  
say if he could see the New World now.  
Probably swallow his teeth and faint  
dead away.

Let us slide furtively into THE NATURE OF THE BEAST and re-  
cord what I've been up to during the last two weeks.

The things I remember are fighting the Gestetner and  
winning another issue. Because of the disintegration of stencil  
#2 I was limited to (I thought at the time) 750 copies...  
of issue #3 of this journal. Ah, but the monster had tricked  
me with its counter. At 320 it flicks down to 219 (I discovered  
later). So to make a dismal story more dismal, I had to  
conform and run off what turned out to be only 622 complete  
copies. My collating fingers and stapling arm (Yes, Virginia,  
it is possible to get Stapler's Elbow) were thankful for  
that.

But...ah, but...even with these #6 blue Gestencils the  
GODDAMNED stencil creep continued! I was at the point of  
taking a sledge hammer to the machine and threatening it with  
death if it didn't stop it.

But (another but, yes) when I got into the all-fiction  
stencils at the tail end of the issue, the creep stopped.  
Howcum, I wondered. What's so different between page 48 and  
page 49?

I figured it out—no long solid horizontal lines used to  
divide sections. Same amount of text. Even some underlining.  
So unless the machine suddenly has cured itself, the long  
lines perhaps are the culprits.

Therefore, an experiment. From now on sectional breaks  
will be by way of asterisks. I'll beat the machine yet!"

REG#3 is mailed out (except for the Trade copies which  
are all set to go tomorrow morning.). It's a good issue.

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THE PORNO IMPERITIVE  
10-9-72

Every once in a while I get an  
itch to buy some new porno—films,  
magazines, books.

Last...umm...friday I hopped on my bike (it being a nice,  
70-ish Indian Simmer day) and peddled downtown. With a moder-  
ate tailwind I made it in 22 minutes, which is a couple min-  
utes faster than a Portland Rapid Transit bus takes.

I found an Adult Book Store and made myself known ("Hi,  
there, I'm your local porn writer...") and was pleased to  
discover two of my books on the racks (PLEASE—FORCE ME! and  
ANAL HUSBANDS AND THEIR DEVIANT WIVES. A word about that  
last: I wrote one of the five case histories on assignment  
in it and Barclay House titled it and gave me credit. The  
"authorship" of these case-history packaged theme books rotat-  
es among the regular writers. PLEASE—FORCE ME! is a novel,  
and I'm proud of it: it delivers and it has something to say  
about the hangups of today. And it has a wang-doodle of a  
mind-blowing total-submission orgy scene final chapter.).

The young clerk had a display case full of 200' color  
8mm films and recommended one especially, called "Playmates"  
#7, in which a guy with (he said) 13½" of cock socks it to a  
beautiful girl, and then she sucks him off.

My eyes lit up, my breathing constricted and I tried to  
be cool. I said I was interested in a film with lesbian and  
dildo action.

"This one is good." And he pointed one out. So I broke  
down and bought the two films. Total \$48.95 (More than I  
can afford but you-only-live-once-and-a-truck-might-end-it-  
all-tomorrow.)

There are some \$5 Danish and Swedish magazines there I  
want to investigate next trip—whenever the Imperitive hits  
me below the bolt...and I feel I can afford it.

The ride home was longer. It's mostly uphill, and the  
15th street grade that ends at Wygant St. is a killer. It  
seems to get tougher each time. (Heart goes KA-THUNK, KA-  
THUNK, KA-THUNK....) But I need that exertion once in a  
while.

At the first opportunity once home I put the "Playmates"  
into the editor and get out Matilda and was mildly disappoint-  
ed. The guy is about six foot four, and the girl is very  
goodlooking and has a great body...but I don't think he has  
13½". No. But that thing does reach at least 9" and maybe  
at full hard gets to 10", which is quite a hunk of meat.  
The girl did some "acting" by showing astonishment and pleas-  
ed apprehension as it grew and grew. Then when he plunged  
into her she displayed incredulity at the size and then amaz-  
ed pleasure.

He couldn't get it all into her, of course.

Then he stood up and she knelt and sucked. Only the  
glans because of his thickness, while pumping him. After a  
minute he came. She had utterly no inhibitions about his  
semen.

A good film. One I'll keep.

Sometime I'll have to see if I can contact other local  
porn hounds and arrange some trades or one-week exchanges.  
Would save a lot of money.

The lez film wasn't as good. Dildo action, yes, but very  
gingerly done. Interesting that besides a plastic penis, a  
hammer handle was used after a rubber had been rolled onto  
it. They did seem to genuinely enjoy the cunnilinctus.

This porn review has come to you courtesy of the IRS,  
who perhaps grudgingly will allow the cost as a business  
expense as research material.

This leads me inevitably to a story in the OREGONIAN a  
few days ago which was about the conclusions of a Danish  
researcher concerning sex crimes and porno in that country.

As I remember it, sex crimes against children declined  
significantly since porno was legalized for books and films,  
as well as exhibitionism and peeping.

Rape has stayed about the same.

His conclusion as to the psychology of it is that the  
less aggressive child molesters, peepers and exhibitionists  
are satisfied with porno substitutes. More aggressive men  
are not defused enough by porno.

Over 90% of the Danish sex shops' customers are foreign-  
ers, and the porn business is slipping....seeking its natur-  
al level.

The same is true here in Oregon.

While I was overtown last Friday I dropped by Rich's  
Cigar Store and bought the August, 1972 issue of THE REALIST  
which has a blockbuster of an article dealing with the secret

government of our country, of which Congress and the President are an order-taking, manipulative facade.

I also bought THE NAKED CAPITALIST—A Review and Commentary on Dr. Carroll Quigley's Book Tragedy and Hope, THE NEWS TWISTERS by Edith Efron, HOW YOU CAN PROFIT FROM THE COMING DEVALUATION by Harry Browne, and RICHARD NIXON—The Man Behind the Mask by Gary Allen. Quotes from these will appear in this and subsequent issues of REG. The Browne book I especially think important.

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RECENT FAN MAGAZINES Holy Mackerel, dere, Andy...  
10-10-72 The Word that Geis is publishing another Must-Read fanzine is out and everyone with a mimeograph is sending their publishing effort, for Trade...and review.

If I were Will Rogers I'd say, 'I never read a fanzine I didn't like.' And it is true that virtually every zine has at least one good item in it. The question is, is it worth the reading time to find it?

This isn't leading up to a killer review. Maybe a few concussions and broken hearts, but no mortal wounds; I may insert a knife now and then, but I won't twist it much.

"You're turning soft in your old age, Geis. Let me flay the incompetent, impale the fuggheads and—"

"This is not a game, Alter. Life is Serious, God is Just and Death is not the End."

"Bah, Geis! And I say 'BAH' again. Life is Ridiculous, God is a hoo-haw, and Death IS the End."

"I'll have to chastise you for those remarks, Alter. Hold out your hand, palm up."

"Geis—"

\*tap...tap\* (with ruler)

"There now. I hope you've learned that blasphemy and iconoclasm are no-no's."

"Didn't feel a thing. Okay if I do some reviews for you since you want to read a book?"

"Yes...all right. But, Alter...be gentle."

"Alter-Ego is always gentle, Geis. I purr with love for all fankind. I adore crudzines. I—"

"All right, Alter, quit the bullshit and get on with it."

Now that Geis is curled up with a bad book.... I see that Jay Zarembo has succumbed to Jesus and has published a farewell issue of THE ESSENCE. Fandom and Jesus are apparently mutually exclusive in his mind. S-f, fandom and other pursuits did not give Jay the direction and meaning that he needs in life, and he has discovered that religion does. And so we say goodbye to a young fan as he gives up his self, his freedom and finds security and a sense of belonging in a Movement. Well, you pay for freedom and you pay for slavery; everything has its price. We all get what we really want; that's the hell of it.

This issue is a folio of drawings by Tim Kirk of characters and scenes from Mark Geston's LORDS OF THE STARSHIP. I find it mildly incredible that he didn't do at least one drawing of the gigantic starship itself or the terrible final agony of its destruction.

Jay Zarembo, 21,000 Covello St., Canoga Park, CA 91303.

zEEn#3 from Earl Evers, Box 5053 Main Sta., San Francisco, CA 94109. Free to interested parties. An analysis and discussion of Louis O. Kelso's economic theory involving democratic capitalism. I characterized this as 'half-assed' in REG#3. A better word is idealistic.

The cream of KYBEN #3 is the travel report of a trip to Germany and Austria by Charlie Hopwood (the snap-crackle-pop of uninhibited reality) and the delightful Rotsler full-page cartoon (ZAP! "Don't move, don't turn the page—You have been gafiated. Turn in your staples.") and most of all the eye-gluing dynamics of James Iiptree, Jr. describing parts of Mexico and some of its people. In one short sketch or two he told me more about Mexico that is valuable and real than I'd known before and made me wish he'd do a life-long series of everything he sees. Walk down to the corner drugstore, Jim, and write about it. You may be a better traveler-reporter-interpreter of event than fiction writer, though you're damn good at that, too.

I hate these superior writers. Add him to the list.

Jeff Smith edits and publishes KYBEN. 4102-301 Potter St., Baltimore, MD 21229. 35¢.

10-11-72 ENERGMEN #13 arrived today with the announcement in its vitals that with its 15th issue it will be dead. Mike Glicksohn, having done what he set out to do—publish a superior fanzine—now wishes to rest a bit and reassess his role in fandom. Fair enough. It's tough on us ENERGMEN appreciators to see the zine go, but Mike promises two extra special final issues before the end.

I can't put him down for his decision, not with MY track record. New Horizons await him. He faunches for release from the drudgery of slipsheeting, collating, stapling, etc. I have been there. I sympathize. When the zine takes up too much time—time to cut back. Enough is enough and you gotta keep yourself free...and a fanzine can become a monster, a slave-driving master.

(Even so...sometimes I wish I had kept SFR going and had moved up here to cut expenses and emotional turmoil. But SFR would have precluded any fiction writing. It would have been a full time job. Who knows, if I can't sell any s-f I may just go back to SFR or something like it.)

The outstanding items of this 13th issue are the critical articles by Sandra Wiesel (on Saberhagen's "Berseker" series) and Angus Taylor (on Phil Dick and Le Guin), the Grant Canfield's folio of "charming grotesqueries" (several of which I would love to use as covers for REG), and the absolutely perfect mimeography on #24 blue paper. The Rotslertoons abound and are a constant delight.

Everything FITS in ENERGMEN, and I don't honestly see how I could improve it if given the opportunity, and that is my highest praise. Mike and Susan edit with grace and skill and style. Rate it 9.

Mike and Susan Glicksohn, 32 Maynard Ave., #205, Toronto 156, Ont. CANADA. 75¢ cash.

Time to shift to something else despite the other zines waiting to be appraised.

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THE ECONOMY  
10-11-72

I am a hopeless predictor. The way to test your grasp of reality is to predict events or trends and see what happens. The proof of your reality is in the predictions come true.

With that in mind:

"Inflation" (rising prices and wages) will get worse after the election if Nixon wins.

Interest rates will be hiked and will trigger a recession in late 1973. 1974 will see more unemployment, more inflation (both kinds) and huge deficits.

There will be a monetary crisis and the dollar will be devalued again in 1973-74.

Wage-Price controls will be extended and tightened. A black market will become visible.

The stock market will lurch and stagger downward at least 200 points in 1973.

SF NOTES  
10-11-72

A lot of books received lately:  
THE PRITCHER MASS by Gordon R. Dickson - Doubleday, \$4.95.  
KULDESAK by Richard Cowper - Doubleday, \$5.95.  
THE GUNS OF AVALON by Roger Zelazny - Doubleday, \$5.95.

I've read the three above and will review them in another part of the forest.

STRANGE TOMORROWS (short novels by MacDonald, Sturgeon, Tenn, Williamson and Clement) edited by Robert Hoskins. Lancer 78713, \$1.25.

WARLOCK by Dean R. Koontz. Lancer orig. 75386, 95¢.

NEEDLE by Hal Clement. Lancer reprint. 75385, 95¢.

ENSIGN FLANDRY by Poul Anderson. Lancer reprint (Chilton). 75374, 95¢.

THE DREAMING CITY by Michael Moorcock. Lancer orig. 75376, 95¢.

THE SLEEPING SORCERESS by Michael Moorcock. Lancer orig. 75375, 95¢.

THE DYING EARTH by Jack Vance. Lancer reprint. 75373, 95¢.

OF TIME AND SPACE AND OTHER THINGS by Isaac Asimov. Lancer collection of science essays. 33023, \$1.25.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE UNIVERSE by Isaac Asimov. Lancer reprint (Abelard-Schuman Limited) 33024, \$1.25.

ALPHA 3 edited by Robert Silverberg. Ballantine anthology. 02883, \$1.25.

WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE by David Gerrold. Ballantine orig. 02885, \$1.25.

THE METAPHORICAL BRAIN by Michael A. Arbib. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. \$14.95.

WHEN WOMEN RULE edited by Sam Moskowitz. Walker, \$5.95. Anthology.

NOVA 2 edited by Harry Harrison. Anthology. Walker, \$6.95 Original.

STARBRAT by John Morressy. Walker orig. \$5.95.

This list is both depressing and challenging. So many I want to read and review and yet I know I won't get to half of them. Despair. Guilt. Determination.

MORE SF NOTES

The October FANTASTIC and the November AMAZING arrived within days of each other.

Ted White's magazines continue to be very uneven. Maybe that's good—the better stories show up better in contrast. And there's a variety of styles.

The artwork continues to be low grade, too. Surely there are artists available who can do better than Cockrum, Staton, Graham, Davis. These are of a breed I recall from the old STARTLING STORIES, THRILLING WONDER, ASTOUNDING, etc. Their work has a crude pulp magazine look.

Isn't Gaughan available? Ted, could you work with Fabian, Kirk, Canfield, etc. by mail some way? It's to the point where the better fan magazine artists excell the prozine artists.

Of the stories in this FANTASTIC I liked TIME KILLER by Dennis Etchison. I value the art and skill of lines like these:

"The watch smashed against the refrigerator, the crystal popping out startled like a dislodged monocle and rolling to a clittering stop by his toes."

"The secretary sprang on the office door with a grating swish of nylons, her fingers fumbling white on the suddenly slippery doorknob."

"She spun around. Her eyes were like those of a cat on its way six flights straight down to the pavement. His first cut her deep in the abdomen. She careened back to her desk, insanely reaching for her purse.

He cocked again. The second shot brought her to her knees behind the desk. An instant later she flopped back, her legs raised and spread apart so that when he went over he could see the blood spots dark red like crushed berries beginning to seep through her pantie girdle and over the shiny mesh of her stockings."

That's clean, sensual, graphic, with the unique detail that makes it come true and real.

Eric Frank Russell's story, "Vampire from the Void" reads like something from his 1940 trunk. A kind of out-of-date plot and writing style. It's very British.

"The Holding of Kolyar" by Gardner F. Fox, and the conclusion of THE FORGES OF HAINLAND ARE COLD by Avram Davidson (and the writing of THE CRYSTAL GRYPHON by Andre Norton, THE FARTHEST SHORE by Le Guin, the KAVIN books by David Mason, etc.) curdle me and almost always give me a bad case of Reviewer's Arm from throwing them across the room in outrage and disgust.

It boils down to my utter dislike of the Archaic narrative style these (and other) authors use in the Sword and Sorcery sub genre to help them convince the reader of the strangeness and differentness and Magik and Other Worldness of their lands and peoples.

I think it's a baroque, affected crutch and I say to hell with it. I also think it probably turns away more readers than it attracts, since it is more difficult to read than a more pure English "voice".

I suppose the theory is that fantasy—heroic fantasy— is such a fragile product that it must be buttressed by a medieval-like syntax and vocabulary.

Would readers believe in magic and wizards and the supernatural otherwise? If a sword and sorcery novel were written "straight" would it be rejected?

I seem to recall that the readers of UNKNOWN accepted writ-modern stories and novels of magic and the supernatural. But, then, most of those stories were set in modern times.

(As an experiment, I've just decided to switch DROID to such a S&S plot—since I've only begun to get serious about the outline—and see what happens.)

But it may be just me: lines like "Her laughter rang out, harshly triumphant. 'Fool! What care I for the people of Kolymar?'

"Nothing. But you care for the throne which is the symbol of rule over the people. Your haunches ache to sit on that throne, Kyrce." drive me up the wall. (From "The Holding of Kolymar".)

The following passage in THE FORGES OF MAINLAND ARE COLD brought my hobnailed feet stomping the magazine.

"And then the nearest of the Wizards, and evidently the first one fed, said, in a clear tone unfatigued, 'Hien and Man Bear and Youngling Main. You have fed us sufficedly, you have listened to us not impatiently, and you are waiting for us un-hastily. This is all according to the natural order and basis of things, and far different—we perceive—from a former age which allowed us to famish: ahah, ahah, ahah! That was not well done! Anumph. We dwell not on that. We have waited and you have waited, and although your wait was not so long as ours, think not that we exact hour for hour. Nay. So. One at a time, then, speak you speaking and we will hearken. And ask, for here eventually come all answers, undistracted by the false delights of life such as be in other lands and provinces, such as fruits and trees and fair flowers and female flesh and wild beasts and birds for to hazard and for to chase: but here be ne things but stone and sand and clean pure air...and, of course, anumph, we the Wizards... Therefore all wisdom cometh here and all knowledge cometh here and all wittings and wottings and all sapiences and powers. To be sure that they venture forth from their sources and disperse over every land and province and island and main, but in thother places there be such distractions as I did mention priorly, hence all wisdom there does dissipate and all knowledge doth melt and doth dwindle...'"

You can laugh at it, cry, or admire it. I think I do all three. A little of that kind of writing goes a long way.

Another gripe I have with the archaic style, especially the narrative conventions of the heroic fantasy story, is that there is hardly ever a serious attempt to make it REAL: I want men to stink, shit, bleed, fuck, swear.... That precious detail which makes a scene stark and true, that small human action, word, reflex which makes characters live in fiction. I rarely see it in Sword & Sorcery. These larger-than-life heroes never have blisters or spend time honing their weapons or do much detailed, graphic fighting. The action is too generalized and contracted. What's the point of describing a battle in two pages if the action-entertainment-involvement-suspense potential is wasted and misused?

But another characteristic of this sub-genre is the fast, shallow pace of the action, the dialog, the scenes. Too much plot, not enough development.

Personally, I find David Mason's KAVIN books unreadable, for the reasons given above. I feel cheated. Andre Norton does a better job of filling out scenes, but she writes Juveniles, and as such they lack the gut approach I like. Of course as a reviewer I can't put her down for writing for a young audience and for avoiding the sweat and stink and dirt of the civilization she portrays: basically superstitious Medieval, set in an era in the future after our golden age of science has destroyed itself.

I suppose it's Conan's fault.

I enjoyed very much L.Sprague de Camp's essay on the life of Clark Ashton Smith. The lives of literary misfits fascinate me. I feel a kinship.

The November AMAZING is another up and down, in and out issue. The conclusion of Greg Benford's JUPITER PROJECT shows it to be what I hadn't realized it was before—a Juvenile aimed at an early-middle teen reader. It's informative, educational, dreary.

Jim Tiptree is the best writer in the issue, hands down, with his "On the Last Afternoon," a three-level tragedy of waste that doesn't give an inch. It's depressing but very good. A struggling young Earth colony is set up unknowingly on the seaside mating, egg-laying grounds of a long-cycle species of giant sea creatures. The colony leader is dying of cancer. He has discovered a lone alien, a kind of tree intelligence, dying on a hill above the colony. They communicate by a kind of telepathy and in the past the alien has helped save the colony. Now, with the huge sea monsters coming ashore to mate (and in the process blindly wreck the colony) the leader asks/begs the alien to help one last time.

The intelligence offers him a kind of life after death among the stars, but his love for his family and his own kind demands that he sacrifice himself and ask the dying alien to do the same—to save the colony.

In the end the leader uses up his life, the life and power of the alien, and the colony is trampled by the last of the sea beasts after heroic efforts.

Jim Tiptree, Jr. takes you up the mountain of reader involvement, makes you sweat and hope, then throws you off the cliff...and makes you admire him for doing it to you.

William C. Johnston's "Here Anarchy" is merely bad. And "Star Walk" by Gerard F. Conway is heavily meaningful, Artistic and...and...sophomoric.

POLITICS Senator Mark Hatfield is running for re-election. His opponent is old, blunt, fierce Wayne Morse, former Senator from Oregon.

Twice I have seen a TV spot, one minute long, for Hatfield in which the candidate sits on a corner of a desk, legs open, stiff as a puppet, addressing some "common man" listeners in the room. They stand about arms crossed in the body-language signal of rejection and defense. Then, with an eye-widening (to me) swish gesture, Hatfield puts his left hand



((Of course a man who would sell acid to kids is one who would not scruple to set up and bust "friendship" dealers and users. Especially when faced with a zillion years in prison if he didn't "cooperate" with the authorities.))

For those fans and readers of REG who would like to send David a hit of his favorite reading, his address is:

David Truesdale  
P.O. Box W.R.  
Green Bay, WIS 54305

David's letter brings back memories of my two arrests back in the mid-sixties or porno charges.

Ah, yes, I remember it well....

I had just taken a shower in my modern luxury apartment in the Alexandria, in Northwest Portland that night. I was in my robe, just settling down to watch an hour TV Special on Michaelangelo, when came a knock on the door.

(I had learned a few days before that I had been indicted by a County Grand Jury in Los Angeles for conspiring to publish an obscene book (THREE WAY APARTMENT) with Mr. Luros, two or three editors, his wife, a bookkeeper, a salesman, and two other authors. A slew of "obscene" nudist, girly, and other sex novels were included in the case. I had learned of the indictment from an Oregon Journal reporter who called me a previous evening to get my reaction. He was sympathetic and was sorry he was the one who broke the news. I and my comment to him were in a news story the next day. As I recall, my words were a cliché defense of a writer's freedom.)

I was happy in that expensive apartment, my first real high on the hog living. Alas, I didn't enjoy it for long.

I opened the door. Two men that I knew instantly were detectives. There is something about policemen, some aura or subliminal body-language gestalt of signals that broadcasts COP.

"Richard Geis?"

"Yes."

And then the half-apologetic announcement that they had a warrant for my arrest. They entered and showed me the paper. I looked at it but I was too rattled to really see it, much less read the words or note which judge had signed it.

My heart was thudding. I was scared. I was in shock.

They had, they said, to take me to jail. I could call an attorney or make another call from the jail. I would be held until a detective from California came up to get me.

They insisted I dress in their presence (I could be a drug addict, could arm myself, could escape out a window...).

At the Portland Police station they advised me to not fight extradition, to let the California detective fly me down and 'get things cleared up down there.'

I signed. I didn't know my ass from a hole in the ground, legally, then. I've learned a lot since. But as it turned out signing was the best course, it did speed up subsequent events, and it involved me in legal proceedings and nitty-gritty life experiences I'm very glad I didn't miss.

For instance, two days and nights in the old felony tank in the old Portland Police Station, downtown, is something everyone should experience.

And six hours in the new L.A. County Jail processing tank (complete with processing) is another.

The detectives let me call mother. I lied to her. She of course knew I had been indicted, but didn't know how serious it was. I told her I had just got word that I had to go to California to testify and would let her know more later.

The detectives took me to the felony tank. On the way I had an attack of weak bowels and anxiety-tight bladder sphincter. I asked to go to the bathroom. I took a few minutes in the stall as they waited outside. When I emerged they again asked if I was an addict. 'Did you take some pills in there?'

Why the felony tank? Because in California conspiracy to publish obscenity was then a felony. Up to five years and/or \$5,000 fine, as I recall. That law may still be on the books.

So I was thrown in with car thieves, muggers, etc. I didn't ask anyone their crime(s).

I see I'm going into a lot more detail than I had anticipated. To properly chronicle the days and nights in that tank and my emotional reactions would take another two pages, perhaps. To do it justice (and to put my memories in concrete for my interested eyes at age 85) I'll do an installment of that whole porno prosecution saga, including the federal case that took me into the hands of the Portland F.B.I. and to the scene of the trial in Sioux City, Iowa, in every subsequent issue of REG. It'll take a year, at least.

Now, on to another letter.

10-17-72 The mail today brought a letter from Harlan Ellison which alas is DWQ all through. Pity, for it would plunge all fandom into war again. \*chuckle\*.

And a complimentary letter from Greg Burton who finds REG compellingly written—he's compelled to read it and I'm compelled to write it.

True on this end; I'm not content to simply write fiction. I have to interact with fandom, and fandom is actually a wide spread of friends to one degree or another...a few of whom may be enemies, but enemies can be friends, certainly they are needed.

I also got books for review today. Oi, did I! Dover Publications sent me the two books I wanted to read and review: THE FALLEUS MALEFICARUM of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, a handsome handbook for witch hunters of the middle-ages...er...the Medieval ages.

And BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS IN HUMAN AND ANIMAL PHYSIOLOGY by Gay Gaer Luce.

Putnam sent ORBIT #11, and Pocketbooks sent Roald Dahl's latest collection of strange stories, titled KISS KISS, and SPACE PUZZLES ("Curious Questions and Answers about the Solar System") by Martin Gardner.

The Ace books arrived: odd selection: six gothic novels by Anne Maybury, one gothic by Gladys Greenaway, and one by Rona Randal. Also a western single and a western double. The science fiction is: Ace double with THE HARD WAY UP by A. Bertram Chandler/THE VEILED WORLD by Robert Lory; BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD by Brian W. Aldiss; "The Original 'Buck Rogers' Novel" ARMAGEDDON 2419 A.D. by Philip F. Nowlan; AT THE EARTH'S CORE by E.R. Burroughs; THE BIG SHOW (collection) by Keith Laumer; Perry Rhodan #18 MENACE OF THE MUTANT MASTER by Kurt

Mahr; OTHER DIMENSIONS by John Macklin ("paranormal" phenomena) and STRAWBERRY SOLDIER by Jim Morris (non-sf.)

I have a letter from Earl Evers and one from Jim Martin I want to publish, then there are four books to review that I've read recently, and then a quote or two...

I found the handle for the plot of THE KING OF DEATHS yesterday, which is the S&S novel I'm starting in this issue of REG; I let the ideas perk in the back of my mind, and last night they melded and came pouring out.

Yesterday (NATURE OF THE BEAST insert here!) I got a letter from C—. She asked about politics—she is inclined to vote for Nixon this time and was shocked at herself; she wanted me to tell her to vote for McGovern, to argue her out of Nixon. Her reasons are interesting: Nixon is strong, McGovern has shown a "wishy-washy" character and doesn't seem to have a mind of his own. She mentioned the Eagleton affair.

I told her to vote for George, said he had toughness, too, to have come this far, and while I think the socialist "trend" will be continued even if Nixon is re-elected, I find Nixon too vicious a man, too unprincipled. Hitler was 'strong' too.

She mentioned she is relatively happy, loves her big house, and is bugged by her little boy who permits her no privacy—he even tries to follow her into the bathroom. He's talking a lot now.

But now I'm off to the cut-rate paper supply company to buy a quire of Sure-Rite stencils for F.A.P.A. use and some badly needed correction fluid. About ten bottles should do. (I'll hedge and buy two.) (I still may go photo-offset next Spring. I want to, and if I get enough subbers, by God...)

On the other hand... I was told at the cut-rate paper co. that they had their fibertone paper on sale at 98¢ per ream a few weeks ago...and I have put my name on their sale-circular mailing list!

I bought four bottles of correction fluid at 50¢ each, and saw they have added a Roneo electronic stencil machine. Was told they will make a stencil for \$2.00. Goodbye, Gestetner. Now, if I could find a way to make these thinner Sure-Rite stencils hold up on the machine without creeping and creasing.

On the way home from the paper company I stopped on Burnside at a porno shop and investigated their film club. Simple: buy the first film at \$24.95 and when you return it (no time limit) you can get each subsequent film at \$10. per, one at a time.

I'll be a customer soon.

I have a feeling that Oregon will repeal sections of the new sex law, either by petitions for a vote in the 1974 elections, or by legislature action before that election.

I also have a gut feeling that these years of late 60's and early 70's are the equivalent of the roaring 20's, and that the cycle will swing around in a few years (during a depression) to puritanism and censorship.

Here I sit with a desk piled high with books, letters and fanzines for at least acknowledgement, to say nothing of review. Again I am faced with the struggle of too much to say and not enough pages. For behold: I am on page 11 now, and if

I had all on stencil by now that I should have, I'd be on page 15 by now, and facing the prospect of a 70+ page issue. Well—ain't nobody gonna say it ain't worth a buck.

Now, back to the old mail, dammit! Earl Evers stroked my turgid ego with: "I feel I have to write you a rave loc, and give you every possible encouragement to keep going along the same lines: you're actually producing a historical document of the sort historians value above everything else. The few similar diaries or collections of letters that survive from various eras are one of the best sources of information on people's daily lives and consciousness in that time and place. So I hope you never get to questioning the whole idea by saying, "This is nothing but a supreme act of egotism: who am I to write about myself at this length; after all, I've never done anything to be worthy of preservation." The answer of course is that it doesn't matter that you're not one of the few who make large personal contributions to history: other people write them up. It takes quite a good-sized ego to attempt such a project and keep with it, of course. Maybe even an amount of desire for self-justification a lot of shrinks would call "unhealthy." But the product is still extremely valuable, as a raw material for future social scientists to use in understanding our culture.

"I like the idea of your describing your reactions to all the various inputs: "news", "mail," "reviews" etc., and of course the temptation is very strong to throw in my own reactions to the same inputs. But I think it's best for me to do this elsewhere, like in F.A.P.A. mailing comments and my own fanzine. REG is not really a letterzine, it's your personal account of important aspects of life, and really significant locs would actually detract from your basic purpose, by interjecting too much of other people's ideas and opinions."

I question if any copies of REG will survive long enough to make them valuable. I suppose I should seal a few copies of each issue in plastic bags and put them in a vault and will them to the Sociology Dept. of Portland State College. Now THAT takes ego!

Thanks for your encouragement; I do admit to a few second thoughts now and then, primarily because I haven't had the overwhelming subscriber response I had hoped/dreamed of. But it's early yet, and I'm always impatient.

I'm taking your advice, Earl, and not publishing the rest of your letter, which is a discussion of Kelso's books, THE CAPITALIST MANIFESTO and THE TWO FACTOR THEORY.

I labeled your analysis and advocacy of his utopian economic democracy 'half-assed' in the last issue; I meant idealistic. I know you argue well, but I still can't convince myself it would work.

I'll insert a shorty from Bruce Robbins here, because he is a rare person. I'll let him tell about it: "Just read REG #1 — I hate to shoot you down, but I am not buying two copies ((of REG)) for speculation (I bought duplicates of SFR, too) — the second copy is for a Canadian fan in the Canadian Armed Forces. If I had the bread I would sock away

many copies of your fanzine but at the moment I am spending my extra money on old fanzines.

"There is really only one dealer selling old fanzines at "high" prices and I'm surprised no one has mentioned it - Roy Squires has all my blessings - in my thirteen years as a collector no one offered to sell or give me the first fanzine, so when Squires offered it for \$65. I gladly paid. My most recent big purchase was the fanzine collection of a relatively old time fan for \$500.

"Actually, I think you need not worry too much about not having back issues of your fanzines for sale ---you copyrighted them, and I fully expect that within the next ten years that reprints of the better fanzines will be a good business ---courses in sf are mushrooming at universities and I expect that more ~~will-finally~~ collectors like myself will emerge.

"PS---you were going to reprint my list of "Sexy SF Paperbacks" from PARADOX #6 with additions. Did you ever work up the additions?"

No. A lot of 'sexy' sf has been published, and a lot of porno with sf trappings has been written, almost all of it bad both as sf and as porno.

What was the first fanzine, by the way? It only shows me again that it pays to keep things. A person can accumulate an estate of some value just by Never Throwing ANYTHING Away.

Bob Bloch's postcard has arrived. Somewhat defensively he prints, "There are about half a dozen of these cards left ---then I'll open a box of green; if they expose anything, it's the color preferences of my wife, who gave them to me, along with the felt-tipped pens. I was using a red pen at the time...."

"Highlight of REG#3, for me, is the novel. Its ending in particular is a sound argument against the errors of vegetarianism, and caused me to throw away all those stupid vitamins --- from now on I'll get my energy direct, from natural sources.

((Be sure the natural sources don't fight too much in the getting.))

"Your day-to-day existence seems a trifle less hectic in Portland, but by way of compensation, it apparently stimulates your imagination, if this issue is any indication. I do appreciate seeing it, and hope all's going well with you."

PUBLIC SERVICE QUERY: Any one interested in joining the SF Fan's Correspondence Club? Write Darline Haney, Rte. 3, Box 195, Elma, Wash. 98541.

At this point I was going to print a letter on economics from Jim Martin, which would have involved a long comment. But I am aware of a dread condition of soul abuilding in me: the True Believer syndrome. I'm hipped on economics and the Secret Masters Who Control The World (Monster Banks & Fortunes) and I am in danger of trying to propagandize all you readers into Knowing the Truth.

But REG is not going to be a propaganda organ; I'm not that far gone. I've shown my beliefs and I'll periodically

make short comments on the state of the economy, but that will be it. So I'll write a private letter to Jim about the velocity of money in relation to inflation and/or wage-price rises.

Incidentally, 4 subscriptions today! 10/19/72.

Dave Piper sent along a funny cartoon page showing some reactions to his getting mention twice in REG #2. More of interest to me and you readers is the clipping from THE GUARDIAN of an article on sf and fandom written by Brian Aldiss.

It has been my impression from several sources that Aldiss had decided sf and fandom were beneath him, but now....

Well, wotthehell, I'll violate the law and reprint without prior permission.

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BRIAN ALDISS 'The attractions of sf are many. For one thing its theme is generally hubris clobbered by nemesis...'

There are some minorities one is happy to be part of. I am a science fiction buff.

Only when my first few science fiction stories had been published did I discover that there was a small, self-contained world of science fiction fandom, the nut cases, the mainliners who could never get enough of the stuff. I had enjoyed similar addiction for years without running across a fellow fan.

The attractions of sf (as we addicts call it) are many. For one thing, its theme is generally hubris clobbered by nemesis, that old standby well used before Homer smote his bloomin' lyre. And the nemeses are generally things invented by man's own hand, whether robots, wars, or things climbing down out of the skies to investigate radio signals. So that the appeal is simultaneously age-old and novel. Then there's the glorious escape of it all, whether to far Andromeda or next week (or last); but it is not just escape, because the themes are often more mind-crushingly relevant than the ones you find in the average contemporary novel.

I'm just trying to explain. But you can't, really. That's how you're hooked. A few honest men like Alan Brien and Robert Conquest admit to the addiction, but most prefer to keep quiet about it.

So a lot of group therapy goes on. This month, for instance, James Blish and his wife are instituting a Milford SF Conference (being held at Milford-on-Sea for reasons too sentimental to go into here), at which fifteen sf writers will be present, tearing their breasts and each other's manuscripts, in an effort to improve sf, or at least thrash out a few principles. Speaking for myself, I view the prospect with horror and skepticism---two entirely different things. Nevertheless, I'm going, unless prevented by a fortunate outbreak of malaria or kwashiorkor.

Next month there is the Novacon 2, a three-day festivity held in Birmingham, from which city a mysterious man called Peter Weston rules a fair slice of sf's social activities. The Novacon has little to do with literature, but then literature has had little to do with sf. So fandom has sprung up, a slight sense of persecution from the outside world helping

to keep it in trim. It's an odd phenomenon, and I believe that no other sort of writing sustains the same loyalty.

The big event of the sf year is the Easter convention, to be held at the Grand in Bristol next Easter. It is semi-serious, with discussions by such pillars of the sf establishment as Philip Strick and Dr. Chris Evans on the writing of Philip K. Dick or dreaming and computers. We also have films, publishers' panels, and so on; but most people go to drink and meet old friends. The atmosphere is intense; for newcomers, the effect is often overwhelming, when you meet people with a similar aberration for the first time. Leading fans are as important as professional authors (though some fans are also authors) and so a rough sort of democracy is achieved.

More interesting even than the conventions are the numerous amateur magazines, often with tiny circulations (under one hundred copies); they represent tireless dedication, which means time and money, on the part of their editors. Yet some of them last for years. I believe the longest lived British one, Ethel Lindsay's SCOTTISH VECTOR, official organ of the British Science Fiction Association, has had its ups and downs, but is now on the up again with Malcolm Edwards editing.

The editors are often ambitious. In London, Bob Holdstock, editor of MACROCOSM, published short stories and writes himself. In Manchester, Lisa Conesa publishes two magazines, ISEULT and ZIMRI, and is no mean hand at a poem. In Southampton, James Goddard, the serious editor of CYPHER, has begun strongly with interviews with Kingsley Amis, J.G. Ballard, and others. And there is Peter Weston again, whose SPECULATION, containing a high level of criticism, has a circulation of something like 400, and is much respected. I should also mention the Australian SF COMMENTARY, now edited by Bruce Gillespie, since it has made itself part of the British scene, and is currently castigating my own early novels.

Many science fiction writers, editors and publishers, have made their first bows in the pages of these "fanzines." There was virtually nowhere else for them to go. One can acquire a reputation through fanzines; thus fortified, one may tackle the more formidable outside world, where they haven't even heard of Barsoom. This is grass roots literature, and has existed merrily since the early thirties. Its importance is obvious. Its disadvantages are that some writers can never quite cut the umbilical cord, and remain addressing fan audiences all their life; but that danger is less since sf has become more widely accepted.

As with writers, so with artists. The fanzines are a refuge for fantastic art. Some of the covers are a delight, far more extreme than anything a regular publisher would dare use. Some of the best known English fantasy artists, like Jim Cawthorne and Eddie Jones, put in many years of amateur work before reaching professional status.

Fanzines are expendable. They come and they go, like conventions. But one day (he prophesied) they will become tremendous collector's items. Runs of VECTOR and ZIMRI will be reprinted by Cambridge University Press. So I tell my wife, explaining why I don't throw away those hundreds of unruly little mimeographed and gestetnered magazines.

On that day, of course, there will be no further reason for sf buffs to feel themselves an oppressed minority. Fandom will then fall apart. Oh well, with any luck it will be after

my time....

—Brian Aldiss, 10/10/72, THE GUARDIAN

I must say, a highly favorable and affectionate look at fandom and fanzines. A few more write-ups like this and we persecuted ones will be accepted and respectable. WHAT A LOUSY THING TO DO, ALDISS!

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SPEAKING OF SCIENCE FICTION.... I have determinedly  
10-20-72 read some of it lately, and  
a small stack of books ready  
for ~~deliberate~~ review lies quivering at my elbow.

The top book, most recently opened, and closed halfway through, is STARBAT by John Morressy. A Walker book, it is an interesting mixture of 19th century plots and sf conventions.

I suppose I could classify it a Juvenile, given the teenage hero (in the beginning) and the implausibilities of the plot (which young readers are not supposed to notice or care about).

And it is heavy in a translation sense—ordinary action-adventure story "translated" to sf by "futzurizing" classic Rome and its provinces.

Thus Del Whitby grows up among the pious puritan farmers of the backwoods planet Gilead. (He arrived as an infant in a space lifeboat, was adopted, and at age 16 was told of his genesis and given a clue to his true parents.) He is captured by space slavers during a raid and is sold to a rich man on Tarquin VII who has a stable of gladiators who fight in the arena games. He is small, fast, naturally skilled, rises to great popularity, is sent to another planet for a special tournament, is betrayed, almost killed, finds himself free to pursue his "real" identity and past, ships out on a pilgrim ship (a load of Edgar Allan Poe and Lovecraft worshippers!) as a guard, and...

...and the ship breaks down in space. Fortunately, a derelict spaceship is sighted which has on board all the spare parts needed to make it functional, with ample food and other supplies, including air, and Del maneuvers his way into the boarding party, lets them take the part needed to fix the pilgrim ship, then seals the derelict and prepares to fix it all by his lonesome and fly it through hyperspace back to Gilead to get his childhood sweetheart, Cassie (he's now in his twenties but true love...), and then go a hunting for the truth about himself. A buddy from the pilgrim ship joins him at the last instant, and they set about repairing the derelict using simplified instruction manuals and charts. Yeah.

At that point in the narrative (the sf editor at Walker must have boggled a little at that point, too) I closed the book and slowly walked away. (Walker, \$5.95)

As a reviewer, life is a series of amended judgements, and I find myself revising once again. I have had a rather low opinion of Andy Offutt, but THE CASTLE KEEPS (Berkley S2187, 75¢) is good and he deserves a compliment even if the characters now and then give lectures about the evils of overpopulation, overcrowding and pollution.

The novel follows the lives of two families in the near future of America; one a fortress-farm group and the other a fortress-apartment family in a city.

Society is in chaos, crime and "rippers" are everywhere, riots are massive, everyday occurrences, everyone is armed, the streets are unsafe at any speed at any time for anyone, and the countryside is riddled by roaming bands of rapists and killers who prey on weakly defended farms.

Andy dramatizes this very effectively with slice-of-life vignettes and alternating country/city chapters, linking the two families by means of one of the farm sons becoming involved with the city family.

Andy makes a convincing case for the "old fashioned" virtues of honor, honesty, and shoot first. Throughout he is making a speech, viewing with alarm and saving the book with some excellent, graphic writing and story dynamics.

THE CASTLE KEEPS is gripping, involving message fiction. I agree with his viewpoint. I recommend the book.

The core of Andy's Truth is contained, I think, in this section of an article written by one of the major characters in the book.

"Readers should witness the animal and utterly barbaric assiduousness with which this writer defends his land. His...territory. His land. His. His territory, and he has an ancient instinctual imperative to defend it, to increase and multiply that it might be defended after his death, to think first of his territory and then of his wife and then of his family and then, perhaps, of defending the distinguished secretary of HEW. What we are dealing with is biology. Zoology. Instinct, if you will, or 'drives' if you prefer euphemisms. We are dealing with the territorial imperative, and with the great human desire to sink, which is a euphemism for fuck. That is something the distinguished secretary should understand; he and his ilk have been doing it to the country for years.

"Who possesses territory in our cities? And should we count a cubicle called an apartment, a cave in the midst of a great complex of identical caves soaring into the sky, protected with unopenable outer doors and locked inner doors and iron screens over the windows—when there are windows? Animals live in those caves, naked apes, if you will. But they don't have any territory, and thus they don't have any respect for themselves, and they certainly don't get it from their offspring.

"In many societies of the lower animals—you remember the lower animals—copulation is engaged in in so-called 'arenas'. That is, the males fight to stake out a piece of real estate, and the females come to them. (Seriously. Look it up.) Only those males reproduce. And the ones with the best territories, the harder-to-defend ones, enjoy the most copulation. The others simply don't reproduce.

"As we see it, our society is set up on precisely opposite lines. The further in the sites, the more deeply buried within the cities and apes, the more easily defended they are and the less choice territories they constitute. They survive. And they breed.

"What do they breed?"

"Crime, that's what."

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LET'S HAVE A CHANGE OF PACE, SAID THE TROTTER.... Last week

there was a local TV news feature on a new wrinkle in churches—Sunday services being held at a drive-in theater: people drove in, stayed in their cars, the minister and his wife conducted the affair from the roof of the refreshments/projectionist/restrooms building, the hymns and sermon went out over the speakers system.

The first Sunday there were 43 cars. This week there were 31.

Now, if they had a traditional gothic drive-in....

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One day, when she told Nurse Waldron that she wished to die, the nurse said that the Lord who had put her into this world would take her from it when she had finished the job for which she was here. "Utter nonsense," Mrs. Roosevelt said, looking at the intravenous tube in her arm, the oxygen tank, and the needle punctures in her skin. Confused and incoherent, often in a semicoma, her determination to die alone was steady and iron-willed.

—ELEANOR: THE YEARS ALONE by Joseph P. Lash

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ANOTHER BOOK REVIEW OR TWO

Gordon R. Dickson, it seems, can turn out a clunker with the best of them.

THE PRITCHER MASS is readable, give him that, and it has a certain interest, but it strains credulity past the breaking point in its final chapters when the climactic psi-psyche struggle for the fate of mankind develops with all the power and believability of a Grade D Sci-Fi overthrow-the-evil-power-structure formula.

The impression is that it's a scenario for a low budget movie and hence the limited number of sets; I was unable to get a sense of planet-wide involvement—everything was a domed, sealed city of Chicago, its nearby countryside and a tower on a space platform beyond Pluto.

Also got the impression Dickson was throwing everything into the plot but the kitchen sink: ecology, witchcraft, evil power system called the Citadel, all kinds of psi elements, mankind in mortal danger.... It didn't jell. (Doubleday, \$4.95)

It's a terrible thing when you look at a book you've read very recently and say to yourself, frowning, "How... what the hell was THAT one about?"

That just happened to me a moment ago. The book in this instance is KULDESAR by Richard Cowper (Doubleday, \$5.95).

My memory blank isn't due to a rejection of the novel because it didn't impress me or because it was bland. I dunno...

I read one other of Cowper's novels a couple years ago: PHOENIX, I think, and was impressed with his handling of an old sf theme.

He has used another standard plot idea in KULDESAR: mankind living in a vast warren of underground cities, dozens of levels deep, served by a vast computer/robot system—for



dom and a cover which has this message: "The ink used in the printing of this illustration has been impregnated with a sinister radioactive poison. By the time you have read this far, you have only three minutes to live."

Sometimes I wish all of fandom could be wiped out so easily. Except for me, of course. Rate the sneeze at 5. (I'm back to giving ratings according to my estimates of worth, not how well the editor may have fulfilled his ambition.)

Tom Collins has access to a printshop and thus is the envy of most of us. His IS magazine shows his imperfect skills as layout artist, proofreader and printer (to a minor degree), but his material is varied, interesting, valuable. Every (well, almost every) item is worth reading for its entertainment and instructive value.

I wish I could persuade him to change the name of the magazine—IS seems an exercise in metaphysics and as such a bit suicidal as a title, unless he is eschewing all but subscription sales to a limited, knowledgeable group like sf fandom.

The professionally printed slick cover, 8½ x 11 photo-off-set format screams for better artwork, more planning, and a more commercial approach. Tom is seeking subscriptions: \$6. for four issues, \$1.50 each (except for the special August Derleth issue—#4), and the magazine is worth it. This issue, #6, has material by Asimov, Poul Anderson...and revelations by Grant Carrington in his "Tiptoeing Through Julane", a recounting of experiences while attending the 1971 Julane Science Fiction Writer's Workshop.

The most absorbing items were the letters from Robert E. Howard to August Derleth. Howard's stories and anecdotes of the west and Texas are eye-openers; life was wild in them days during the frontier.

These issues run thick; this one is 84 pages, #5 was 100 pages. The subscription address is: 4305 Balcones Dr., Austin, TX 78731.

(My sf review column, "The Alien Critic" didn't make it into IS #6; I am assured it will be in #7.)

I have more fanzines awaiting, but let's break the monotony.

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ANOTHER SHATTERED ILLUSION DEPT. "Many people have tried

to condone Eisenhower's sins by contending that he was too dumb to know what he was really doing, citing the tongue-jangled syntax he displayed at press conferences. Not so, says Garry Mills in his highly readable (but in spots very misleading) book, NIXON AGONISTES. Mills writes: 'Eisenhower was not a political sophisticate; he was a political genius.' Behind the infectious smile there resided a cold and calculating mind. Although Eisenhower did not do wellscholastically at West Point, he scored extremely high at the even more competitive General Staff School. He was an excellent bridge player and turned poker into an extremely profitable passtime. More important, says Mills, Eisenhower's Army career was largely built on his ability as a writer of manuals and ghost writer of speeches, and he was regarded as an excellent editor, with dogmatic insistence on precise syntax. The fumbling and bumbling and the garbled circumlocutions were so much show biz. This was a conscious strategy of Eisen-

hower's to avoid answering questions in detail. For example, Mills reports during the Quemoy-Matsu crisis, the President's press secretary, James Hagerty, advised him to take a 'no comment' position on the whole issue. 'Don't worry, Jim... if that question comes up, I'll just confuse them,' replied Eisenhower. It takes superior intelligence to be able to deliberately double-talk one's way out of tough situations. The President's speech writer, Emmett John Hughes, acknowledged that Eisenhower 'made not one politically significant verbal blunder throughout eight years of press conferences and public addresses.'"

—RICHARD NIXON, The Man Behind the Mask  
by Gary Allen

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ALL FANZINES WILL BE PLUNGED INTO WAR!  
10-24-72

Up front, let me say that my motives for writing this are base,

despicable, vicious and self-serving.

Now, with that out of the way, I'll get to the point: LOCUS, the bi-weekly sf newszine published expertly and mostly on schedule by Charlie and Dena Brown. Is LOCUS an Amateur Magazine and thus eligible for consideration for a third Best Amateur Magazine Hugo Award in 1973 at Torcon, or is LOCUS a prozine in fact and not eligible?

Does Amateur mean non-profit? I tend to think so.

LOCUS does turn a profit, and a handsome one I should say. In fact, there is some question in my mind whether LOCUS should have been on the final ballot this year as an amateur magazine, at L.A. CON.

Or does 'amateur' mean that anything is eligible so long as the publisher does not make his living from his fan effort? Even if a "small" profit is turned?

One of these years a convention committee is going to have to face this question. Because if a magazine is eligible that shows a small profit and is not the primary income of its publisher, then AMAZING and FANTASTIC could be nominated for Best Amateur Magazine...and next year RICHARD E. GEIS could qualify as a prozine.

How does that grab you?

But THIS year of eligibility, 1972, REG is as yet non-profit and is qualified for the Best Amateur Magazine Award, and I am eligible for Best Fan Writer Award.

So it figures I want to shoot down LOCUS, right? I admit it all. I'm shameless. Now please address yourselves to the profit/non-profit/LOCUS/ amateur magazine question—it's a valid question and should be dealt with before a concrete precedent is set...if anyone but those directly concerned is interested.

What say you, Lapidus? Warner? Pelz? Ted White? Weston? Gillespie? Etc?

Even if Charlie and Dena withdraw LOCUS this year, the issue still must be resolved, because next year...and the year after that....

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AHHH, ZELAZNY  
10-25-72

The second volume of Roger Zelazny's epic novel of Amber is out now from Doubleday, titled THE GUNS OF AVALON (\$5.95).

The first volume was NINE PRINCES IN AMBER, which introduced the concept of the only real world, Amber, and its "shadows" (among which our world as we know it is one).

Now Zelazny, with less casualness but a few indulgences, carries the story forward as Corwin, one of the Princes, this time succeeds in conquering Amber and taking the throne from a brother Prince.

Ahh, but a great evil is upon Amber and it stems from a terrible curse he laid upon it while captured and blinded by the then supreme brother.

The third and final volume will involve the struggle to save Amber from the evil powers of the Circle of Evil and will also, no doubt, clear up the mystery of the long absent King of Amber, the Princes father.

Amber is a Magic Kingdom, the Princes are super-human beings, virtually immortal, incredibly strong, who have incredible powers.

It is, not science fiction, but sword & sorcery at its best. It is fantasy.

And Zelazny tells it straight—no thees and thous or archaic style. Of course he goofs once in a while, as when Corwin (who spent many decades exiled in our world) says to a companion from a shadow world, Avalon, where guns are unknown, "Shoot." (meaning "Go ahead and tell me.") and the companion does not boggle at the expression.

Then there is that stretch in Chapter 2 where Zelazny uses up three pages in pure, almost unbroken dialog, as if he were killing time or doodling. It goes like this:

"The men are afraid of you," she said. "They say you never grow tired."

"I do," I said. "Believe me."

"Of course," she said, shaking her too-long locks and smiling. "Don't we all?"

"I daresay," I replied.

"How old are you?"

"How old are you?"

"A gentleman would not ask that question."

"Neither would a lady."

"When you first came here, they thought you were over fifty."

"And...?"

"And now they have no idea. Forty-five? Forty?"

"No," I said.

"I didn't think so. But your beard fooled everyone."

"Beards often do that."

"You look better every day. Bigger..."

"Thanks. I feel better than I did when I arrived."

"Sir Corey of Cabra," she said. "Where's Cabra? What's Cabra? Will you take me there with you, if I ask you nicely?"

"I'd tell you so," I said. "But I'd be lying."

"I know. But it would be nice to hear."

"Okay. I'll take you there with me. It's a lousy place."

"Are you really as good as the men say?"

"I'm afraid not. Are you?"

"Not really. Do you want to go to bed now?"

"No. I'd rather talk. Have a glass of wine."

"Thank you...Your health."

"Yours."

"Why is it you are such a good swordsman?"

"Aptitude and good teachers."

That's the first page. None of the information imparted is new, it is simply repeated for the woman's benefit...and she is killed a few pages later.

In spite of these flaws...you could call them deliberate bad writing (does Zelazny not care any more?)...the book is engrossing, well paced, well done.

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IT HAS COME TO THIS—FANZINES AGAIN! While I am trading with almost anything that spews from a duplicating machine, I find I am becoming reluctant to review them all. So I will go the LOCUS route of a listing and perhaps a one sentence description. And I shall add my own rating/evaluation: 1 to 10 scale; 1 is incredibly awful and 10 is incredibly good.

I'd rather spend my space and time on sf books, other observations, and piquant quotes from books and letters. Sorry, gang, but there are too many of you and too little of REG. Blame it on prosperity—too many fans able to afford to publish.

A note on trading policy, too: when a new issue of REG is published, a copy goes to every fanzine reviewed/listed in that issue—and I'll try to be conscientious about all items received.

To try to get caught up, then, I begin.

NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES #15, edited by Samuel Edward Konkin III, 235 East 49 St., New York, NY 10017. 40¢. An anarchist zine, amateurish, interesting. Rating: 4.

MOTA #6, edited by Terry Hughes, Route 3, Windsor, MO 65360. 25¢. A fine fanish fanzine. Rating: 6.

STANLEY #12, published by the Cepheid Variable Science Fiction Club, POB 5475, College Station, TX 77840. No price listed. Clubnews, reviews, letters. Rating: 4.

SF COMMENTARY #29, edited by Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. 9 issues for \$4. Reviews, criticisms, authoritative letter column, dedicated editor. Rating: 8.

LOCUS 121-124, edited by Charlie and Dena Brown, 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, CA 94116. 12/\$3. News of sf prodrom, fandom, publishing. Reviews, listings, occasional columnists. Absolutely Necessary. Rating: 9.

WIZARD THREE, edited by Dab Steffan, Woodfield Road, Cazenovia, NY 13035. No price. Personalzine. Rating: 4.

DE PROFUNDIS, c/o L.A.S.F.S., POB 3004, Santa Monica, CA 90403. 4/\$1. Clubzine. News of LASFS, fanzine reviews. Rating: 5.

TELLUS INTERNATIONAL SFCD-NEWS #3, edited by Science Fiction Club Deutschland. Write Gerd Hallenberger, D-3550 Harburg, Alter Kirchhainer Weg 56, West Germany. 10/\$2. News of European sf fandom, names and addresses of prominent fans. Functional. Rating: 5.

VIEWPOINT #8, edited by Fred Hemmings, 20, Beech Road, Slough, SL3 7DQ, Bucks, United Kingdom. About 40¢. Comments on war games, real wars, good sf comments/info, and amateur sf fiction. Rating: 5

SMILE ANHILE #11, edited by Florence Jenkins, 13335 S. Vermont Ave., Gardena, CA 90247. An Alcoholics Anonymous type fanzine, for those who are and are trying to stay off the stuff. Free, but you should make a contribution. Rating: 4.

YANDRO #216, edited by Robert & Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348. 40¢. Articles, editorials, columns, reviews, letters. A consistent, reliable, very good fan magazine. Rating: 7½.

YELLOW BALLOON #6 (Sept. 72) Edited by Richard Small at 117 S. Meridian St., #3, Tallahassee, FLA 32303. 20¢. By and about Tallahassee fandom. Also with a printed copy of SMOKE SIGNALS, an ecology-zine in comicbook format. Rating: 4.

STAR TREK TODAY #5, Jim Meadows III, 62 Hemlock St., Park Forest, ILL. 60466. 20¢. News, reviews, an amateur S-T story. Rating: 5.

WOMBAT #3a, edited by Ron L. Clarke, 78 Redgrave Road, Normanhurst, 2076 Australia. No price listed. sf & fantasy poetry. I refuse to have an opinion.

COLUMBIA FANDOM 1967-72 THE LAST SHOT, Doug Carroll, 1109 Paquin, Columbia, MO 65201. Singing the nostalgia song of a now splintered fan activity center. No price, but 25¢ is fair. Rating: 6.

PLACEBO #4, edited by Moshe Fedor, 142-34 Booth Memorial Av., Flushing, NY 11355 ... and ... Barry Smotroff, 147-53 71st Rd., Flushing, NY 11367. 35¢. A two-headed personalzine. Rating: 4. (They sent me two copies of #4 and want two copies of REG in trade. 18 pages of pica type in #4.)

DIVERSITY #3, edited by James W. Harris and Greg Bridges. 50¢. Write Greg Bridges, 3711 Poplar Av., Memphis, TENN 38111. Articles, reviews, columns. The editors are splitting up, will publish different zines. Rating: 4½.

MAYBE #21, edited by Irvin Koch, 835 Chatt. Bk. Bg., Chatta-hooga, TN 37402. 50¢. Mostly fan magazine reviews and letters. Rating: 5.

WASTIC PAPER #3, Grant Canfield, 28 Atalaya Terr., San Francisco, CA 94117. A personalzine of uncommon interest and fun. Pl. if all else fails. Grant, a fine artist, reveals a breezy, clever writing style. Rating: 7.

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THE LONG KNIVES  
10-26-72

I invited comment on "Tomb It May Concern" in the last issue, and the readers, driven by inchoate hatred of my writing skills, responded with criticism (They say. Nit-picking, I say.). Below is printed some of their irrational, idiotic comments...with my reasoned, calm, keen replies:

ALPAJPURI wrote that he didn't think Ndola's ego and exhibitionism was well enough established to make logical his entombing Vik in the crystal coffin.

I replied in a letter that sending an expedition to the

wilds of Nork for crystal slabs for his tomb was evidence enough, surely.

Whereupon in a letter received just today, Paj concedes, but shifts to: "One more thing about TOMB — why does the eidetic Messenger take notes from Vic ((sic!)) ...?"

Obviously Paj has a poor memory—Vik's secretary takes the notes, not the messengers.

Paj also gets personal: "I do recall seeing you at Pelz's one time — you struck me as being somewhat reminiscent of a Farmer type — don't think you were quite wearing overalls and waffle-stompers and chewing a grass stalk at the time, but that was the general impression I got...."

How rare, how utterly worthless are the impressions of a long-haired hippie freak! But, seriously, I suppose I do come across as a square, visually, which shows again the truth of that mossy old cliché: Never Judge a Fanzine by It's Open flyleaf.

FLIEG HOLLANDER, mired hopelessly in Iowa City, IA (A fate worse than Sioux City)(That will Offend middle west readers) wrote: "...the primary fault I found with TOMB was the fact that Vik's use of words kept changing a little too much for his character. That is, he didn't sound like the same person from one segment to the next. The physical description was fine...though tended to emphasize the fact that he was in perfect physical (and in some cases more than perfect) condition.

"Um, it seems to me that someone who had been through the necessity of changing positions every 50 years or so would have developed certain habit patterns of making his body grow apparently old to match the necessity. Or perhaps this was the first time that he had worked a civilized portion of humanity for some time, that would account for his sloppiness. Perhaps you could have made the reasons for his poor dissemblance more real."

Yes, his carelessness is mayhap a bit incredible, but you'll just have to take my word for it—he got contemptuous of the mere mortals around him, and hence careless. He waited a bit too long. He was lazy. If I ever rewrite the story I'll buttress that point a bit.

Flieg wanted more development of Vik's attitudes toward the mortals and of the shutting off of part of his personality necessary at the very end for the sake of the higher order, "survive!"

In the next Kunzar story his feelings will be further examined.

Flieg liked the development of the background (as did everyone so far—some mentioning that the background and future history were more interesting than the story, even the rest of REG).

He notes: "Apparently the trick of getting the beginning and the end and working toward the middle ((of a plot)) is common. Clarke describes it in "Lost Worlds of 2001" as wrestling with a large and uncooperative snake pinned firmly at both ends."

He further amends my knowledge with: "I'm afraid the lion doesn't make an awfully good bearing animal (i.e. for riding), though it is of course an impressive one. The bone structure involved isn't meant for bearing heavy loads over

any distances. I suppose that the rulers would use them more for show than for very long journeys. I admit to the definite psychological point of the Emperor (and his officers) riding lions."

I meant to mention in the story that the lions had been genetically altered to grow to at least twice present size, and had been altered to be more safely domestic. But I forgot to insert that info. Little points like that is what makes sf so hard to write.

10-27-72 I INTERRUPT THE UNKIND CUTS to mention that today I got an assignment from George K. at Barclay House. A case-history book about parents who swap their 12-15 year-old kids, along with their mates, for sexual purposes. Yeah! That should twang the hidden incestuous heartstrings of a few thousand porno buyers.

Now back to the Criticisms.

Flieg further advises: "Back to Kunzar. He should have eaten the brain as well, and possibly the spleen, but a very good bit of reasoning there. The most complete food for humans is other humans, and it's a good thing it isn't too popular."

Cracking the skull to get at the brain would have been a problem, and I submit that after having eaten the heart, liver and both kidneys, Vik was full.

GLEN COOK, temporarily stymied with his own fiction, wrote: "You'll change the title, I'm sure. And you seem to be aware ... that the opening bit is far too porno-ish.... Otherwise it is difficult to fault the story as story (I was intrigued, and like you it takes some writing to grab me with sf anymore). Your ending (you really have the opening part of a novel there you know) may cause some trouble. Heroes shouldn't end up in caskets—even if they do in reality. Stylistically excellent except for this one little nit: passive voice. You slip into it at the least appropriate times — i.e., the attack on Kunzar where he gets shot in the thigh. (I may be over sensitive on the issue. Joanna Russ once worked me over mercilessly for doing a sex scene in passive voice, and I've never recovered.) In setting you've done a beautiful job, and I think this is what grabbed me most about the story."

Believe it or not, Arnold E. Abramson, President of UPD and publisher of GALAXY/IF, visited me in Los Angeles about ten years ago (when he was an editor for UPD) and advised me to avoid "was" in sentences and "which was" above all. He signed me to a 10 book contract. As I recall I never did do all ten for them. And I am still using "was". \*Sigh\*

BOB STAHL speared me with: "Despite the title (actually because of it), I enjoyed TOMB... I don't think it was quite Hugo material (don't be too crushed), at least in the form it appeared, but it did have a considerable amount of power to it. I thought the bit about aliens was bordering on cliché, but I guess you've got your reasons."

I have a weakness for all-powerful, string-pulling aliens. They substitute for a God.

J. BRENT MACLENN refuses to "perpetuate a crime against humanity by mentioning the title by name...I must admit that

I found the background "world" of the story to be more interesting than the story itself."

Hmm. Another problem in writing sf: make sure the background doesn't overwhelm the characters...or make the characters as strong as the created world.

J. Brent didn't like all that underlining. In pro book or magazine form that underlining would be italics. But even so I do have a tendency to use it too much! Including too many exclamation points!

Flieg and Brent and Glen also suggested ways to explain a very fast ice-age.

DAVID B. WILLIAMS poked me with a stick by saying: "I will limit my comments on "Tomb It May Concern" by A. L. Terego to the observation that your left lobe suffers from two afflictions that I quickly detected in my own efforts, what I might term "narrative clotting" with a strong secondary dose of "fractionated action". I'm stronger than you on narrative clotting, the attempt to force a phrase or sentence to do more work than it can, in all justice, perform. Example from page 9: "Vik pressed his ear to the expensive, inlaid office door." You are forcing this sentence to tell the reader things about the door that interfere with the communication of the sentence's principal purpose, to tell the reader what Vik is doing."

True, some sentences can be cluttered and weighed down with too much detail, but I disagree that the above sentence is overworked; I think it makes the reader see that door, and since the action is simple, the adjectives don't interfere. I will concede that I could have cut out "expensive" since that is perhaps inherent in "inlaid".

"You're a bit stronger on fractionated action than I am, the focusing on single specific actions that together complete a larger and more important action. An example from page 11: "Vik brought his left hand up to grip the gutter vine again. He swiftly edged further out until he was hanging opposite the oval window. He swung his legs up, planted his bare feet on each side of the window, bent his knees, kicked himself outward, closed his feet and ripped through the transparent membrane." The reader's attention is drawn to so many stop-action details that the single dramatic action of ripping through the window into the room is obscured. Also note the frequent use of adjectives supplying supplemental information in a passage that is intended to communicate raw action: left hand, oval window, bare feet, transparent membrane. In every case, these supplementary details were provided earlier in the story or implied. Another case of narrative clotting."

I remember a feeling of being trapped in that sequence, and your point is well taken. However, I feel strongly that my Theory of Writing SF—make the reader SEE, HEAR, FEEL, TASTE, TOUCH makes a degree of "clotting" necessary. This is especially true in sf where the problem is to make REAL exotic and strange surroundings and beings. The line between doing and overdoing is thin, I expect, and perhaps depends on the individual reader/editor.

And I believe in reinforcing the image; make the reader experience the new world again and again, to make it solid and convincing. I didn't want the reader to forget Vik was

big, powerful and black, and I kept on "triggering" the image of Ndola as small, cunning, old, dying. I believe in graphic description...and I suppose I have to sacrifice a certain amount of narrative speed. That's okay as long as I can hold the reader by other means.

Now we come to a criticism I've been waiting for, and Bruce D. Arthurs provides it: "I did not like TOMB IT MAY CONCERN. At best it was competent. But I think you...depended too much on porno-like shock value, particularly with the cannibalism in the final scene. Not pornography, but carnography, violence for the sake of violence. Definitely overdone. If the characterization had been a bit deeper, perhaps it would not have been so intrusive. Most of the characters were one-dimensional. The reader cannot sympathize with Vik Kunzar, because you've given no reason why we should sympathize with him. I could not care about him."

I knew I couldn't capture every reader; some would reject the self-image that identification with Vik would entail, and others would recoil from the brutal explicitness of the violence.

You couldn't see yourself in Vik and didn't want to be him.

One of my life-long criticisms of mass fiction is it's wanting to have its violence without the real consequences of violence. Thus on TV villains are shot—and die silently and instantly, and rarely do they bleed or lie wounded. Almost never do they scream with pain and die realistically. It's all pretend.

But I was deeply moved and influenced by a story I read in my teen-years, "Christ in Concrete" by an Italian American whose name I have forgotten. A construction worker falls into a concrete form, he is impaled by the steel reinforcing rods, and in the sequence of the faulty, disintegrating building, a load of concrete is poured into the mold, burying him. The horrible detailing of his dying really impressed me. I never forgot it.

So my style is in that same vein. Violence—killing, torturing, etc. should not be "easy." IT HURTS! People should realize what happens REALLY! Children especially should not "learn" that violence is easy and painless and neat and clean.

At the same time people—most people—like to read about killing, etc. They like grisly details...but don't like to admit it; they're afraid of their attraction to death and agony, they sense how close to the surface violence is in themselves. They have a push-pull reaction to it. The beast lurks in us all. Keep him chained, pretend he doesn't exist, but how irresistible, how fascinating to watch him...from a safe distance...and to know about those of us who couldn't control their beast or whose society-culture imposed controls are too weak....

And all the above applies to human sexuality, the second great force in us all.

So for ideological and commercial and personal reasons I'll continue to write rough, sexy sf. That's my bag.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN, MUGGED In a flyer sent along with the latest issue of his magazine, KYBEN, recently, Jeff Smith suggested a kind of certificate of merit to be presented to Bill Rotsler from those in fandom who

feel he deserves some recognition (since he keeps missing out on an overdue Hugo) for the contributions he has made to fan-zines and conventions for lo these decades.

Jeff asked for indications of support and <sup>for</sup> secrecy, since he wished to surprise Bill.

I thought it a fine idea, wrote Jeff so and included a dollar.

Today I got a letter from Jeff. The full text is as follows.

"Dear Dick—

"Thanks for your support of the Rotsler award, but here's your dollar back. I'm really feeling too rotten to go into the whole story, but basically when Ellison got his copy of KYBEN he called Rotsler up and said, 'Hey, this guy's insulting Tim Kirk' and Bill said 'He shouldn't do that' and Harlan wrote me a blistering letter and Bill wrote and said he could not possibly accept. So fuck it. Tim Kirk was in on the whole thing from the beginning and in fact drew the award himself so obviously he didn't think it was an insult to Tim Kirk, but Rotsler still refused.

"And I'll be damned if I ever try and do anything nice for anybody again.

"But, yeah, thanks for your support. I guess I'll write Silverberg, too, but if I were to write everyone I'd need the dollar back just to minimize losses.

"I really am sick over this. Ah, well. PHANTASMOCOM is over half-stenciled, and Roger Zelazny just sent his stuff in, so I guess I can work on that.

"Till later,  
Jeff"

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THE MAIL Larry Shaw sent Virginia Kidd a letter giving 10-28-72 her full clearance to market CANNED MEAT and declaring all rights to RAW MEAT returned to me since Brandon House does not intend to reprint the novel.

I am happy.

Now if only the first copy and two carbons of THE ONE IMMORTAL MAN would reach me. I got a card from the typist saying she had mailed them in one package on the 24th, the same day the card was mailed. If that package is not waiting for me in the drawer on Monday I will Raise A Stink.

Somebody at Ballantine (maybe in the Publicity Dept.) is alert and quick on the trigger. They insist that I read and review something by David Gerrold, since today I got my third copy of WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE. And with it a copy of WITH A FINGER IN MY EYE, which I welcome, since Alpaajuri thinks some of the stories are excellent.

I have only one question, folks: WHEN IN HELL AM I GOING TO FIND TIME TO READ ALL THESE BOOKS???

Stop the world! I want to catch up!

MIKE DECKINGER has moved: now at 649 16 Av., San Francisco, CA 94118.

Also received today: SUPERNATURAL CATS, an anthology edited by Claire Necker (Doubleday, 16.95).

And Larry Paschelke, a Portland subscriber, wrote in passing, "I saw mentioned in the paper last week a fellow whose name is Oral Love. I looked it up in the phone book and he's there."

I checked, and sorovagun, there he is: Oral J. Love. The calls that man must get.

This has been an exercise in Trivia. Gotta keep my trivial muscles in shape.

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"I've been going crazy lately, in case anyone's reading this. I've become paranoid, clinically paranoid, and right this moment I'm methodically downing Heidelbergs by the six-pack in an attempt to get melting drunk to stop the screaming inside my head. I'm not sure why I'm going crazy, but I am, and believe you me it's a kind of scary process.

"Throughout my youth I always thought I was crazy, since I was so different from everyone else I knew. And since all those Normal people with their three-foot-long penises and neanderthalish brows took advantage of every opportunity to r/eject me, I grew to be quite smug about my insanity, my pariahhood. I grew up (in)secure in the knowledge that I was mentally abnormal, and that this not only set me apart but set me above the rest of the world.

"Then I became a hippie dooper freak and took lsd and discovered to my surprise and satisfaction that my kind of abnormality was actually far healthier than the mundane sanity around me. I was actually a slan, not just Different, but Better. Everyone knows what great status accompanies insanity. When you're impressed by someone you say, "Boy, is HE weird!" or "God, she's strange!" To be crazy is quite a feather in the cap of any with-it, in-the-know human being of 1972. The Social Register equivalent of this insane elite could be any fanzine mailing list.

"Recently, however, I've discovered that in some ways I am crazy, I mean like really insane, like unhappy crazy, like dying-inside, screaming-inside bonkers. And it's a real drag. So here I am getting drunk and typing an apazine—sort of like weaving baskets in an asylum, isn't it?

"But you know, I can philosophize about being crazy. Sure, I wake up mornings cowering under the covers staring wildly around me wanting never to get out. Sure I hear people talking about me, and how smug their laughter sounds! Hate rises in hot red waves, fear trickles through me like lightning.

"But just think of the bright side. (Full circle again, folks:) I can be one of the all-time greats in the literature biz. My insanity will put me in the same class with Poe. What fame. What egoboo. What coppers in me pockets. I can be Great, because, like Samuel R. Delany, I'm a stricken, wounded, suffering artist, I'm in pain, dig?, so I will extrude pure unadulterated ART from my bloodied fingertips. Straight from the deeps of Hell, boys. Straight from the cesspool of the mind.

"But meanwhile my friends laugh at me behind closed doors, fans plan great schemes to humiliate me a continent away. I can really get off on Byron's trip, committing suicide at 18. I'm already 21 (so aged!), and I'm not about to knock myself off JUST YET, you know, at least not until my life story has been told. Like, maybe in a few years or so, or a few minutes,

but that's so far out. True ART exudes like pus from the emotional sore that's scraped between the ragged screams of insanity and the granite-cold face of death. Just before the artist (read: human bean) turns on the gas, leaps over the precipice, slices liquid ice into his wrist with razor-blade fascination, or feels the thin tight trigger squeeze blood from his hot wet forefinger—just before he reaches the line, he puts down on paper or canvas the shrieks from his eyes that no one seems to see. I'd rather spend my life with near-suicides than all the nice, normal, stable, healthy people in the world."

— Alpajpuri, POGO #1

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"Re moon madness—a friend reported that the local highway patrol has operated on moon charts for years. Outside of such normal peak times for accidents on the highway such as holiday weekends, the time the most—and the most serious—can be expected is during the full moon. They don't know—or care—why. It's just an empirical fact of life they have observed and use in their scheduling."

— Richard Ellington, letter, 10/19/72

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"Character portrayal is usually so personal a thing, I mean in David Gerrold's story "In the Deadlands" (in the WITH A FINGER IN MY I collection, which you SHOULD read) the protag sleeps almost all the time, and David later told me this signified he was crazy, since crazy people sleep all the time. Oh, all right..."

— Alpajpuri, letter, 10/21/72

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REVIEW/DIATRIBE 10-30-72

I was wrong to "review" Barry Malzberg's BEYOND APOLLO in REG/3 by simply saying it was a fuck-the-Reader book and please see my column in Tom Collins' IS magazine for further details.

Since Tom is happy to print my reviews (new arrangement) after I stencil them for REG, I see no reason now not to stencil the IS review I completed earlier. As Tom says, our readerships probably won't overlap very much, and as I say, I owe first allegiance to REG.

BEYOND APOLLO by Barry Malzberg almost screams for a discussion of its place in science fiction not as a novel but as an example of the Fuck-the-Reader attitude of many writers and some editors.

Barry Malzberg, I'm sure, is writing the kind of books he wants to write (or is impelled to write by inner demons) and he's writing them well. The problem, as I see it, is that his stuff appeals to and interests only a few (relative to the "mass" of sf readers).

Barry is highly intelligent and as happens sometimes with superior minds, perhaps he cannot endure writing (or even attempting) what he conceives of as "pap" or "junk" or "commercial fiction." It may bore him, he may hate to read it and would never be happy writing it.

I think that the difference between the "pure" writer and the "commercial" writer (ignoring the inner parameters

and demons which can make a Lovecraft or an unpublishable fanatic) is one of ego, pride, image. It is a question of who comes first—the "average" reader or the writer. It comes down to basic motivation, too: why is the writer writing?

Many "pure" writers secretly or unconsciously despise readers and resist any consideration of them, except negatively, feeling that to recognize any obligation of any kind puts them in the "hack" or "literary prostitute" class.

The "pure" writer writes only what he feels like writing, submits it to a publisher and if it is bought, fine. If after many submissions a piece is not purchased by an editor, it will go into the cabinet to await, perhaps, a new set of editors...who have better taste.

And God knows—editors come and go very frequently.

The "pure" writer will have no truck with formula or the common narrative devices for hooking the reader's interest, nor with the strong elements of plot structure. This would throw him into the role of the servant, the "degraded talent" and the whore. He is above that, because that involves writing for the reader and not for himself.

Some "pure" writers are sadistically inclined toward the lowly readers: "I'll fix you, you bastards! You want entertainment, hah? You want a good story with a solid, conclusive ending, hah? Okay, read this! And THIS! Make sense out of that! You morons! See how symbolic and deep and complicated my writing is? Feel inferior! Feel dumb! Why should I be dependent on idiots like you who happen to have a price in your pockets? Why should your abysmal tastes dictate my writing? I hate you! I'll see you stinking readers in hell before I'll stoop to 'entertaining' you."

And there are always a few editors who share this attitude, consciously or unconsciously. It boils down to elitism: We Superior Few vs. The Masses.

Okay. I'm not saying such "pure" writers should not write, nor that their usually plotless, self-indulgent pieces should not be published.

Why should I try to impose my Shoulds on them, any more than they on me?

I am saying that editors buy this type of intellectual fiction because they feel it is Important, is Significant, or Has Something to Say. And they usually know up front that it will lose money. It is justified under the tattered flags of Art and Literature.

Oh, sure, some books are not commercial in the usual sense, but are in the aspect of quality that compensates for lacks this way or that. If a story or book is spellbinding, plot or no, characterization or no, it'll sell.

But if a book isn't excellent and exceptional AND is obscure, puzzling, difficult to follow, ambiguous, inconclusive, with a withheld, rip-off ending.... Then there's no way it will sell enough to pay for its ink, figuratively speaking.

I have to say I think Malzberg's BEYOND APOLLO is such a loser. Malzberg leads the reader on, leads him to expect answers to Malzberg created questions: Did Evans kill the Captain of the Venus mission? If so, how? Will the doctors at the government hospital rip his mind apart to get the final truth and leave him a vegetable? Which of Evans' explanations is the truth? What is fantasy in this surrealist diary format novel and what is real? Who was insane on that incredible space-

-flight and who sane? Were both men insane?

But Malzberg's ending is another of those infuriating non-endings, the answers are withheld, and the reader, if he paid \$5.95 for this Random House book, without knowing the kind of story Malzberg writes, has a right to think Random House and Malzberg thieves.

The dust jacket cover quotes Bob Silverberg as saying: "Barry Malzberg's dark, bleak vision of the future is one of the most terrifying ever to come out of science fiction."

Well.... That's one writer being nice to a friend. Standard professional courtesy.

The book began to bore me about halfway through because nothing was happening except variations on the game of hide-and-seek (reader seeking, author hiding answers), and repetition.

It's a short story puffed up to 40,000.

It's books like this that can, do and will give of a bad name: sincerely, unconsciously, unknowingly pretentious, self-indulgent, anti-reader.

I believe a story can be intellectual, significant, well-written, and plotted, structured, entertaining, and come to its end with loose ends tied and questions answered—all at once. It is even conceivable that such a story might also have a happy ending.

I have little patience with material that is designed to be frustrating.

I'm aware that I may be too stupid to understand what Malzberg is saying, and to appreciate his skills and his techniques. It is possible he is writing over my head. I'll even admit it—the man is in my experience extremely intelligent.

I think also he is self-defeating; I wish he'd use his obvious talent and skill to say what he wishes to say to the world in a format that gives the ordinary reader a coating of entertainment around the bitter pill.

But, then, I'm probably more reader than writer.

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST  
10-31-72

I did get the mss from the typist on Monday. The neat, clean, IBM typed "The One Immortal Man" and the first carbon are now winging their way to Milford, PA.

When I read it to check for mistakes I cringed a bit; the dialog seems stilted. The bawdiness seems a bit overdone. But, still, it will be a commentworthy story for whatever magazine publishes it. It certainly was for REG.

Jim Martin asks pertinent questions which I am prepared to answer. His 10-25-72 letter starts with praise and then

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"I have read parts of REG #3 so far with great interest, but your indication in an earlier letter that you would have something of interest to say about masturbation was more than justified. I am amazed at (and envious of) your ability to discuss such things (in a personal, and not just general way) publicly. It raises a question that has piqued my curiosity ever since REG#1: Does your mother read REG? Goes C—? Do you (or would you) find it more difficult to talk

about sexual matters, or other kinds of more personal matters in print destined to reach their eyes than in print simply reaching the eyes of some sort of impersonal public? And is there a third category of friends and acquaintances whose perusal of your inmost thoughts is less comfortable than that of the anonymous reader but more comfortable than that of a parent whose role in childhood made her feared? (Sorry for the undully complex sentence.) Perhaps your readers would find some words on the subject interesting."

No, I don't think mother reads REG. There are stacks of them down here and she has only to take a copy and read it. I wouldn't stop her. (I'd be a bit apprehensively/amusedly interested in her reaction.) She has never read one of my books...but she never reads books. She knows I write sex books, generally. She knows I am trying sf now. She knows I print some kind of magazine dealing with sf. She keeps herself ignorant of the details of my professional/hobby life. (She knows I masturbate, of course—those occasional semen-clotted and dried handkerchiefs in the laundry bag—but does not know about Matilda...that is, I don't think so. She might snoop while I'm out. Matilda and my porno circulars are in unlocked file cabinet drawers—she could know. If she does she keeps that knowledge to herself, which is best; what's the point of making an issue of it? Mother is not a puritan.)

Would her reading each issue of REG alter my level of honesty? No. It might make it easier on me. I'd be more secure. If she did read REG and discover my "terrible secrets," would she get uptight and demand I stop or leave her house? No...but she'd worry about other relatives finding out, which would be a cause of embarrassment for her, not for me. I'd be willing to move, though, rather than... I'm not sure now. All the good stuff is told. Soon REG #1 and #2 will be sold out.

I'll say this, finally: I hope she does not read them or hear about the "shocking parts" because they would cause her concern and worry. I want to spare her that. But I will continue writing to the limit of my honesty.

Does C— read REG? No. I didn't give her a copy, haven't sent any. I'm not sure what her reaction would be. There are three people who read REG who know who she is or who have met her. It's unlikely she'll ever see any of them again. But the primary reason I keep them from her is because her husband would get ahold of them. That would not be a good scene for her. He would use them as a weapon against her, perhaps in court.

My best friend here in Portland has copies. He is interested and enjoys them. They help him understand me better, he says. Our relationship hasn't altered.

And the post office clerks are still warm and friendly.

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SF NOTES I have five or six sf magazines in various stages of consumption (they cough weakly and look at me wanly) and I have a few comments.

F&SF continues to suffer from a bad printer, with some pages badly centered, some with offset, some with gray print, often those thin strips of cut edges sift from the pages...

"The Animal Fair" by Alfred Bester suffered from being written by a man with a rep. I expected pyrotechnics and he gave me a fable about ecology and man's inherent schizophrenias. Interesting and I could only nod and say, "Yes, ain't it a shame." and it's been said before—often. It's in the Oct. F&SF.

THE WIZARD OF ANHARITTE by Colin Kapp in the Dec. IF is intriguing—a struggle between defenders of a slave system allied with a galaxy-wide free-Trade Council dedicated to putting down evil notions of democracy wherever possible, and a feudal lord who is a wizard and who is undermining the slave-capitalism alliance on a planet called Roget. He is buying the highest quality, most intelligent slaves, educating them to the hilt, then selling them to unknowing owners, seeding the planet with a Trojan Horse slave elite.

I await Part Two with interest. The story is told from the viewpoint of the Free-Trade agents on Roget who are opposing the wizard. I kinda hope they win.

I started "Hurdle" by Piers Anthony, but it was written in a cute, tongue-halfway-in-cheek style I cannot stomach. Also, the smart-aleck moppet who dominates stupid, "How-do-I-get-into-these-fixes?" father turned me off. The story has a 1940-ish flavor. Ptui! (Dec. IF)

IF has recently, I note, come out with some sexy covers. When sales are low, a bit of eye-catching female flesh is always a good idea.

Frank Herbert's PROJECT 40 which has started in the Nov. GALAXY is well done so far. The developing struggle between a secret, hidden swarm of hive-humans and a secret, Kafkaesque government investigative agency develops reality and power as it progresses. Very intriguing conception.

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WATERGATE The significance of the Watergate affair 11-2-72 and its spin-offs (the subverting and sabotage of Democrat campaigns, the huge dirty-deal slush fund) is that if the American people let Nixon and his crew get away with it...there probably will not be another free election for President in this country; they'll be tampered with more and more seriously, perhaps more and more blatantly.

I look for strong intimidation of the free press from now on if Nixon wins.

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THE WAR I may have egg on my face in a week, but 11-2-72 the current peace balloon ("Any day now...") has a phoney, contrived look to it. Nixon is dangling the carrot again. Now Thieu is balking...now Kissinger has further points to clear up...now the cease-fire is unlikely before the election....

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IF YOU'VE GOT LOTS OF GUTS.... Then DON'T BARK ON IT! by Martin J. Meyer and Dr. Joseph M. McDaniel, Jr. shows you how to make up

to 13% interest on your savings with insured accounts. The core is a willingness to find banks and savings & loan companies who will grant 10 or more days "grace" per quarter and who compute your interest daily.

Thus if you have \$10,000 in a bank at 4%, you leave it in until the tenth day after the beginning of the calendar quarter, then you walk in and gaily withdraw the \$10,000 plus the 10 days' interest.

With your pockets bulging, you walk across the street and deposit that ten grand plus interest into a 5% S&L daily account which grants interest 'from the 1st of the month if deposited by the 10th.' You are, therefore, getting interest on the \$10,000+ while the money was in the bank! Cool!

All you have to do is have the guts to do that every three months.... Or, as the authors explain, S&Ls and banks willing, every month! in some cases.

You may be cursed at by bank and S&L officers, and your ears may burn, but you'll get that extra money! (Paperback Library 65-649, 95¢)

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BOOKS RECEIVED RECENTLY      STAR TREK #8; six ST tv scripts adapted to regular fiction form by James Blish. Fast reading. (Bantam SP7550, 75¢)

DOC SAVAGE #71: "Murder Mirage", written by Kenneth Roberson (Bantam S7418, 75¢)

THE SWISS BANK CONNECTION by Leslie Waller (Signet non-fiction 05244, 95¢) Banks are amoral and Nixon is tainted.

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"Let's blackmail Dick Geis!"

"How?"

"Well...uhh...."

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST      Last night close to 11:30, the phone rang upstairs. Mother answered it and then called down: "DICK—

PHONE!"

One word flashed through my mind: C—.

I went up and it was she. She has a gun, a revolver with a tricky cylinder. She had had it hidden with some shells for it. Her husband had found it recently, she discovered, and had in turn hidden it from her!

Believing herself possibly in danger (because she had a few days before told him she intended to leave him again—but not to come to Portland!—as soon as she got some money together) she went hunting for the gun and finally found it in the attic...with a lot of things her hubby had apparently taken from his place of employment.

Worried, she called collect to ask for advice. Father Geis asked a lot of questions and finally advised getting rid of the gun: "Bury it. Throw it in the ocean."

But as noted before in these pages, C— is a highly intelligent girl; she will do as she thinks best. The call was an emotional contact, a touch, a wish-you-were-here, wistful.

If only she didn't weigh over 200 lbs., if only she didn't have that kid, if only I had a million dollars, if only I were a different person, too.

MORE BOOKS, MORE BOOKS! NO TIME, NO TIME!!      Four DAW books arrived this morning, with the latest nudes—full PLAYBOY, the latest WASHINGTON MONTHLY, THE NEW YORK REVIEW of Books....

The DAW books all look readable, all have good, interesting covers. They are: MENTION MY NAME IN ATLANTIS by John Jakes (#25, 95¢); GREEN PHOENIX by Thomas Burnett Swann (#27, 95¢); ENTRY TO ELSEWHEN by John Brunner (#26, 95¢); SLEEPWALKER'S WORLD by Gordon R. Dickson (#28, 95¢).

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LI\*&" (This translates in Typewriter to: 11-7-72)

Election day. I voted for George McGovern, Morse, and Prop. 9, which forbids property taxes being used to run the schools. It's designed for property tax relief and to force the legislature to bite the bullet, get off its fat asses and face the issue it's been dodging for ten years. Even so, the opinion polls show #9 behind. Indeed, according to the polls, all my choices above are losers.

I'M BLEEDING! Charlie Brown in LOCUS #126 reviewed REG#3 and said, "Very bad fiction by Geis' 'alter ego' mars a usually interesting issue."

So this's what a bad review feels like.

AAARRRGHHH!!!

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AND THERE'S NOVA, TOO      I should read ORBIT #11 and 11-8-72      make this a double review, but I read NOVA #2 last week, and I'd

better review it before all my thoughts about it fade away to that heaven of good intentions reserved just for mine... next to Ellison's vast plot.

I was disappointed. This is an anthology whose theme is that Technology has feet of clay. Harrison is a multifaceted writer and editor. This group of original stories is uneven, full of good intentions and correct thoughts and attitudes. He has put together a New Waveish potboiler.

As for instance "East Wind, West Wind" by Frank Robinson which exaggerates smog and ecology danger to the point of gas masks, sneaking rides in banned cars and worldwide air pollution in extremis.

There is some humor, as with Robert Sheckley's fragmented satire of 'sword and sorcery' (as Harrison spells it) "Zirn Left Unguarded, The Jenghik Palace in flames, Jon Westerly Dead." Choice caricatures of s&s themes, scenes and styles.

"The Sumerian Oath" is an indulgence by Philip Jose Farmer—a surrealist jape at doctors that romps along at top crazy speed. A bit too much.

I had thought Bob Silverberg would never write another time travel story after having demolished the theme with his UP THE LINE a few years ago. He's written another, though, but not seriously, in "Now + n", which has the smooth, glossy cosmopolitan, jet-set make-believe of an old Carol Lombard—Cary Grant movie of the mid-thirties. And time travel is further made ridiculous. This man never stops driving stakes.

Barry ~~has been~~ has been on a mission (seemingly endless)

to say us beware of space—that way lies madness and disaster. His characters are all (in this series) insane. I don't understand his vision nor do I like his form; the stories and novels are distorted realities that leak credibility and verisimilitude at every pore. They seem self-defeating.

This particular segment of his vision is called "Two Odysseys Into the Center." It also mocks mankind, sf, ANALOG and sf fans. This man is a bitter cynic and should be Destroyed!

"Darkness" by Andre Carneiro is written in an "unAmerican" narrative style that is refreshing for being different.

He puts the sun out (in effect) for a few weeks and shows what happens to a city full of people who cannot see.

Two alternate worlds linked by fiction media—a book and a tv tape player is the idea that Damon Knight uses to show us how everyday life in one world is adventure to another, and vice versa. Not a heavyweight idea, but well executed.

Ever wanted to know what it's like to be a mutant bird? Naomi Mitchison shows you and in the showing you live the life of an outcast and then triumph as a very smart bird indeed with the best mate at the top of the pecking order (with a little help from experimental scientists). "Miss Omega Raven."

Future TV (total sensory) script within a script within a script story. Ed Bryant. "The Poet in the Hologram in the Middle of Prime Time." Talent seduced, used, frustrated. A theme dear to young writers, intriguingly done, full of gimmick.

Now, you see why reviewing anthologies and collections is a drag? Each story should be encapsulated and commented upon in a hopefully short space...but the accumulation of short spaces can run a full 1,000 words or more. Madness. But I stagger on.... (Also, how nice it would be to be able to quote lines and paragraphs to illustrate points good and bad, but how interminable would run the review of just one set of stories. But, counter-thought, if done well such reviews would be intrinsically interesting, full of wisdom, observation and acute detail. Ah, well. I could easily spend 8 hours per day as reviewer-critic. I could run 100 page issues. I could go mad. I may have already. Back to NOVA 2....)

"The Old Folks" by James Gunn is the kind of story Rod Serling snaps up for dramatization on NIGHT GALLERY: contemporary, chilling, suitable for a hollywood set. In this story some old folks HATE young folks, to the death.

A parody of sf again, easier done so-so than done well. I am reminded of a snake eating its tail. Parody, satire, caricature... Why do they hate the old ways so much? \*sob\* This one is "The Steam-Driven Boy" by John Sladek.

"I Tell you, It's True" by Poul Anderson is a tale of a device that makes its possessor believed and trusted by anyone within its range. Fine, as long as our side has a monopoly.

One of these days Jim Tiptree, Jr. will write and sell a story in which the protagonist is not doomed, and in which he or she actually wins, is saved, and/or triumphs. I'll fall off my swivel chair. In this one, "And I Have Come Upon This Place by Lost Ways," a suicidal space anthropologist climbs an alien mountain and dies on the brink of requiring Tiptree to write and explain further. Another cop-out.

Why in hell couldn't Evan have had the strength to get through that Portal, Jim? I bled with him all the way up that fucking mountain, and....

Why does "serious writing" have to be a downer all the time? More importantly, why do I, the reader, who has been captured by a writer and who lives in and with a character, why do I have to die all the time? I get mean when I'm killed! Have a care.

The last story in NOVA 2 is "The Ergot Show" by Brian Aldiss, who now writes, line by line, so fascinatingly that it doesn't matter if the story is obscure and its meaning hard to come by. I got the general impression that he was warning mankind to shape up.

And so I sigh and cover this typer and go read a fanzine. Go thou and do likewise.

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THE ELECTION The pollsters were right. The American people want a tough, decisive man in the White House. And they weren't really hurting, economically. Morse lost to Hatfield. He is 71 years old and people figure he's had his time in office.

Prop. 9 went down the tube—all those renters opposed it, knowing property tax relief will come from their pockets via higher state income taxes or a sales tax.

I leave the field of battle with this quote from THE SWISS BANK CONNECTION by Leslie Waller.

"By not bothering to examine the corrupt connections of our politicians, by ourselves patronizing the goods and services of organized crime in ever-increasing numbers, we have already cast a 'yes' vote. We see little wrong with the modern image of organized crime.

"Until we do, the mob will continue to corrupt our lawmakers and enforcers. Our representatives will continue to represent powerful business and criminal groups rather than the general voter. And, to that extent, the general voter will continue to cast a meaningless vote, election after election."

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"THE LORD GIVETH, THE LORD TAKETH AWAY DEPT. The Oxford English Dictionary will henceforth include and define the word 'fuck' in its pages; a thousand or so years of actual usage by English-speaking peoples seems to have sufficed to legitimize it.

"However, say the shadowy savants behind the OED, 'fuck' is not Anglo-Saxon; the word comes from Middle English."

—Robert A. W. Lowndes

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THE FANZINES COMETH, THE LORD DOESN'T TAKE THEM AWAY DEPT. DIVERSITY #3, edited by James W. Harris, published by Greg Bridges, 3711 Poplar Av., Memphis, TENN 38111, 50¢. A mixture of appalled fannishness and serious sf articles. Rating—5

TITLE #8 edited by Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Dr. St. Louis, MO 63131. 25¢. Provocative articles, reader reaction categorized by subject. Good idea, good execution. Rating—7

WASTE PAPER #4, a personalzine cobbled together from Grant Canfield's thoughts, quotes from letters, quotes from magazines, whatever. A jaundiced, sharp-tongued view, with love. 28 Atalaya Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94117. \$1.

VIEWPOINT #9, edited by Fred Hemmings, 20, Beech Rd., SLOUGH, SL3 7DQ, Bucks, UNITED KINGDOM. 35¢. A good convention report: Chessmancon. Plus articles, reviews, letters. Rating—6

THE TURNING WORM #3, edited by John Piggott, Jesus College, Cambridge, CB5 8BL, UNITED KINGDOM. \$1. Fan oriented, with lots of letters. Rating—5½

SON OF GRAVAN #20, edited by Walt Stumper, 8764 New Hampshire, St. Louis, MO 63123. 25¢. Newsletter of the GRAPHIC FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY OF SAINT LOUIS. News, reviews, letters. Rating—5

ARTS and INFINITY, a report from Morris Scott Dollens on his life style, his artwork, his trials and tribulations, his hopes and fears—a personalzine, and very interesting. 25¢. Morris Scott Dollens, 4372 Coolidge Av., Los Angeles, CA 90066.

MOEBIUS TRIP #15, edited by Ed Connor, 1805 N. Gale, Peoria, ILL 61604. 50¢. Highlight is Paul Walker's interview of James Schmitz. Articles, reviews, letters. One of the top ten fan magazines. Rating—7½

LOCUS #126—as noted previously. THE sf newzine.

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"The erect kangaroo penis is 14 inches long, lady kangaroos become sexually aware for 12 hours every 32 to 38 days, then there are 30 to 40 days of pregnancy, followed by another 60 days in mom's pouch before the little nipper's ready to start hopping. Hippos have penises that are ten to 12 inches long, they can get it on three days monthly, pregnancy is 237 days. Zebra penises measure 18 inches, female is sexually attractive two to seven days every three to four weeks, pregnancy is one year. Mules sport 21-inch penises, one inch longer than horses—but it hardly matters (in terms of baby mules), because baby mules don't come from ma and pa mule teams anyway. Baboons boast six- to eight-inch penises (if they could boast), lady baboons are in the mood four to nine days every 40, pregnancy is 183 days. Lions' penises are a mere five inches, oestral ecstasy is a possibility one week out of three, pregnancy 108 days. Dragonflies don't exactly have penises, they have little hook-like jiggers a quarter inch in length that guide packets of sperm toward the ovary ducts, and (while it's a whopper when they do screw) they only do it once—and it happens in the scheme of a one-to-three year life cycle wherein the idea of 'pregnancy' doesn't mean much. Seals got penises four inches long, mating happens only once a year—the fling lasting from a month to a month and a half—and calving occurs ten months later.

Camels do all right with their two-foot penises, but after that statistic, everything else is so irregular in their sex lives that it's hard to say anything definite except for this: pregnancy lasts about one year. Rhinos have eight-inch penises, non-erect, and are so secretive about doing their thing for speculation, they seem to make it three days out of every 40 to 50; pregnancy is 488 days. Galapagos tortoise has a penis that is not only a foot long but six to seven inches across (they bang one month of the year, the eggs incubate maybe 200 days, depending on the humidity)."

—Stolen from Grant Canfield's WASTE PAPER #4, and God knows where he stole it.

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THE NEWS The English have imposed a credit/money cut-ll-ll-72 back on their banks to diminish the supply of money so that prices won't go up as much. This is a strange way of recognizing what really causes wage-price rises. If the government itself stopped running huge deficits the banks consequently would not have all that extra money/credit to spread through the economy. The Prime Minister is going to impose wage-price controls soon. They have a 10% rate of inflation.

On our side of the ocean (of red ink) the stock market a-l-m-o-s-t closed above 1,000 on the D-J averages, a "magic" level that has resisted penetration for six years. This is the market's third major try to make it through into Wall Street heaven.

The "Chartists" say that if the market (Dow-Jones Averages) doesn't penetrate the 1,000 mark this time, that would be a "triple top" of a bull market and would signify awful things in the future.

A prominent stock market commentator (Babson) said on WALL STREET WEEK (PBS) last night that long term investment prospects are bad because of 'no end in sight' of inflation and socialization of this country. He said the situation is worse in England, that that country is 10 to 15 years ahead of us in socialism. Not that far, surely!

Now Nixon is reorganizing the Executive third of our government and talking no new taxes, retrenchment in spending. If really no new taxes that means staggering federal deficits the next few years and a continuing high rate of "inflation". The 'Secret Game Plan' slowly unfolds.

That cease-fire is still not in sight, in Vietnam.

Anthropologist Leakey has found 'human' skulls and bones under volcanic dust which is 2.6 million years old.

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THESE OLD BONES OF MINE... A few days ago, just as my creaking sacro was feeling better, a neighbor lady with a (probably) cancer-riddled, bed-ridden husband called mother and said he had fallen out of bed and would I come over and get him back in. The man is so weak he cannot stand up.

So we went over and there he lay in a tangle of sheet on the hardwood floor beside the bed, a thin plastic tube

running from a square rubber bag into his penis. He was a big white human slug, dull, incoherent on wine and downers, gray bristly face slack.

Dead weight. I could feel my muscles crack and my vertebrae grinding.

I understand he's paranoid when coherent, and full of thinly disguised hate. The poor fucker knows. Doctors never tell them, but they know. Hate anyone who'll live after they die. Hate those they depend on to nurse them, because they are dependent, because they are in obligation. And how many magazines can you read and how many books while you wait for your body to rot? How much TV can you watch? It all turns to ashes in your mind. Who can laugh at SANFORD & SON when there's a cancer or two or three or more growing and eating in your organs? Where's the future in reading...or caring?

Dying that way is a hellish process for everyone.

I lifted him in late afternoon and that night I was stiffening up and Feeling Pain when I tried to bend over. But nobody knew. I suffer in silence.

IN ADDITION my knee—right leg—had recently been giving alarming cracks whenever I squatted or knelt. Couple days ago it stopped that snap-crackle-pop and just started to hurt when walked upon...er, when weight was put upon it...well, you know what I mean.

Other than that I feel fine and am sure of living to a ripe old age of 46.

Mother went to her doctor again yesterday to insist that he do something about her hurting wrist and shoulder. He took her blood pressure and said no, we do something about your blood pressure—much too high! (It was over 230 diastolic last time and higher than that this time. 230 is dangerously high—stroke country.)

He gave her prescriptions for a cortisone pill and a pill that takes water from the blood, thus relieving the pressure by diminishing the quantity.

She's hypertensive.

I haven't been doing much work on MASTER OF DEATHS the past two weeks because of the porno CHILDREN SWAPPERS assignment. The problem is that I find it difficult to switch from sf to porno and back every day. The sf is complicated and requires a great deal of concentration and marshalling of factors, character, plot, background, etc. I tend to "lose" this material when I have to switch off and think about other writing. It recedes in my mind and I have to spend a lot of time re-reading and re-implanting it in the foreground. Because of this, I've decided to put MASTER OF DEATHS aside and put all possible time into CHILDREN SWAPPERS and get it finished as soon as possible. THEN swing back to Mof D.

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BOOKS RECEIVED RECENTLY      NIGHT OF DELUSIONS by Keith Laumer (Putnam, \$5.95)...DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg (Scribners, \$6.95)...THE PASTEL CITY by H. John Harrison (Doubleday, \$4.95)...NEW DIMENSIONS II, eleven orig. stories, edited by Robert Silverberg (Doubleday, \$5.95)...GRAY MATTERS by William Hjortsberg (Pocketbooks 78242, \$1.25)...WINTER BLOOD by John Roc (Pocketbooks

78248, \$1.25)...ARTERY OF FIRE by Thomas N. Scortia (Doubleday, \$4.95)...THE ASTOUNDING—ANALOG READER Vol. One, edited by Harry Harrison and Brian W. Aldiss (Doubleday, \$7.95).

As if I don't have enough to read, I joined the SF Book Club in order to get copies of—AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, THE GODS THEMSELVES by Isaac Asimov, and MUTANT 59: THE PLASTIC EATERS by Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis.

And last night I bought a copy of BEYOND FREEDOM & DIGNITY by B.F. Skinner (Bantam Y7549, \$1.95) and THE WASHINGTON PAY-OFF by Robert N. Winter-Berger (Dell 9509, \$1.75).

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MORE DIRT ON MY TOMB      A few more reactions to my  
11-17-72      novelet, "Tomb It May Concern" in  
the last issue have appeared. Great

shovel loads thumping down on my crystal roof.

Gene Wolfe, an admirable writer, wrote: "TOMB IT MAY CONCERN — well, it concerns me; by which I mean that it's much too good to be called crap, yet sufficiently bad that I think it could be improved a great deal.

"You have some good, new ideas; and some old ideas ("conventions") too. And a lot of your amateur critics are going to stomp on those old ideas because they have some vague dissatisfaction with your story and don't know where to pin it. Don't listen — there is nothing wrong with conventions. The things that could use some improvement are character development and style. The character development I won't touch; I have been working at it for fifteen years and am still playing in the shallows. But let me show you how I'd rewrite some narration (I hope you're mad by now; you should be; you should be saying to yourself that you can do it better)."

((I'm not angry—I'm serene in my superiority.))

"From pp 12 and 13:

The other man had almost three seconds, but he was older and slower. He was pulling a spring-powered dart gun from a leather bag beside the table when Vik got to him. Vik slapped the gun away, and brought his hand back and across the jeweled face.

"Okay, now you improve on that. Mark it up. But before you go back to see what you originally wrote. Then compare your improvement of my improvement to the original."

Okay, I immediately marked up the above and came up with:

The other man had almost three seconds, but was older and slower. He had pulled a spring-powered dart gun from a leather bag beside the table when Vik got to him. Vik slapped the gun away and back-handed the jowled face.

My original version was:

The other man had almost three seconds. He was older, however, and slower. He was pulling a spring-powered dart gun from a leather bag beside the table when Vik reached him. Vik slapped the gun away.

Vik did not waste time. He brought his hand back and across the jowly face.

It's obviously better not to waste words telling the reader the hero is not wasting time. I thank you, Gene. I'm becoming more and more aware of passive voice, too.

I hope my learning more about the craft is helping some of you out there in the vast REG audience. Half-vast, anyway.

And then Robert A. W. Lowndes arrived with his steamshovel. Arrrgh, the pain. Dipping his nib into my blood, he wrote on my forehead:

"You may chalk up another egoboo point on your personal charm scoreboard, because your story is the first appearing in a fan magazine that I have bothered to read for many a year; generally I avoid fiction in fanzines somewhat more than I'd bother to avoid the Plague."

"What's good about Tomb It May Concern? The story is carefully worked out, plotwise, so that neither the sex nor the violence seems arbitrary but natural under the circumstances as they unfold. The circumstances themselves work out naturally under the conditions you have laid down. I think you have a saleable tale here, and one which many readers will enjoy.

"What's not so good about it? The title; it suggests a burlesque of something. The story as it stands is little more than an extended outline. I don't know whether it really needs novel length to flesh out, so that it is more than sex and action on a backdrop that looks interesting but is not filled in enough so that the reader can really enter the world you've created. But I'd guess that novella length, at least, will be necessary. These faults I cite as an editor."

((The title has been changed...I realized early on that what was okay for fun-and-games in REG would not do Out There. I plan as of now to write a continuation of the story, a novella of about 40,000 words, as soon as I've finished the current novel, KING OF DEATHS, hopefully about this time next year. The two stories will total around 60,000 words and can be sold as a novel.))

"As a reader, I could wish that you had done it differently, simply because (aside from some specific elements which are yours alone, including your final scene) everything in the tale is familiar to me. That's because I've read so goddamned much science and fantasy fiction over the past 40 years. (However, were the background to be filled in completely, then the familiar events in the foreground would not capture my attention so closely and so immediately; they impressed themselves on me simply because there was hardly anything else to look at. Essentially, nothing was surprising, even though there were nicely different details.)

"My chief complaint is that Kun-Zar is stupid. It isn't clear to me (and maybe you yourself have not decided) how many of his extended years he has actually been conscious; but one thing is clear to me: he hasn't learned much of anything from his experiences. But, of course, in order to justify the sex and violence you wanted to write about, your immortal man has to be stupid. And, as much as I enjoyed your individual touches, pardner, I'm really weary of stories about stupid supermen. Hope some day you'll feel like writing about an intelligent one. (If you do, you'll have to forgo the fascinatingly bloody plot outline — at least insofar as the superman as superbitcher and irresponsible supersuckerfucker goes.)"

((As I wrote in a letter, Bob, I think you're objecting -28-

to lack of rationality, not lack of intelligence. Vik, like all of us, is all too human in his life-choices. He is too often governed by his emotions, by his character/personality needs/imperatives. I may not have made that clear enough. But, you're right, after a thousand years of living he should have been more foresighted. Should. But he goofed and thus a satisfactorily bloody, sexy story resulted. God, if all story heroes or protagonists acted intelligently (rationally) damn few stories would be worth reading...or writing.))

"I gather you want to continue writing this sort of thing, and interrupting the far superior REG content above the line with it. Well, it's your magazine and I certainly defend your right to use it for any manner of expression you want to publish. But it will take an awful lot of love for you on my part to continue to read such. A straight pornographic tale, uncluttered with science fiction, would be far more acceptable."

((I find myself wishing now that I hadn't advertised REG as I did ('shocking fiction') because I have come to see that beyond this issue fiction isn't too hot an idea. I've benefitted muchly from the professional technical critiques but you are not the only one who has written that he'd rather have more regular REG format than fiction. And I find that I would like to do even more reviews and commentaries, letters and quotes than I can if 10-15,000 words of fiction is included.

((Also, the fiction, I thought, would make REG more attractive and varied. It is perhaps out of place, instead.

((And...and...the cash flow has been encouraging of late: \$17. on Monday...\$24. today.... The subscriptions do continue to flow in. This issue now is assured of that fanzine nirvana—a profit. In fact, with REG #1 back issue sales continuing (and #3, too) those issues are now in the black, and, if the cash flow holds up through December, I'll no doubt go to a 1,000 copy photo-offset edition of SFR #43's 68 page format. This issue of REG has to have a run of at least 700, and you KNOW how I feel about slaving over a hot mimeo and that much collating and stapling.

((A 68 page size printed format is the equivalent of about 45 pages of this standard mimeo format. There'd be no room left for a chunk of fiction.

((At \$1. per copy REG is practical in the photo-offset package with a moderate number of subscribers. And it makes a great deal of sense to save those 40-odd hours of production work for pro fiction and pleasure/review reading, provided the cash flow equals the costs. Time will tell.

((You may ask why I get involved in these large-circulation fanzines. Why aren't I content with a zine for F.A.P. A.? Why am I into amateur or semi-pro publishing so deeply? It's buried in my genes, I think. As a child I was always playing with toy printing sets, I published an Air Scout magazine once, I wrote for the school paper, I was always reading, always dreaming of being a writer. So here I am. The bug/talent is in me and it will force me to use it within my personal parameters.))

You better turn the page—I don't like to be read this far down the column.

FULL STOP!! PRECONCEPTION OVERBOARD!! or MR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, SIR, IF I SLUG YOU IN THE INDEX WILL YOU REVOKE MY COPYRIGHT?

11-18-72

I just got a postcard from my agent-in-waiting, Virginia Kidd, who, after having said, "I wasn't exaggerating. I really like THE ONE IMMORTAL MAN." (After having said in a previous letter she thought it "absolutely smashing".) ((THAT \*snap\* TO YOU UNWASHED FAN CRITICS!)) also wrote, "You do realize, Sweethot, that your admirably pig-headed intention in publishing things first in REG safely copyrights them, but absolutely rules them out for all them high-priced markets, like Playboy among the magazines; and each and every one of the originals-only anthologies: Damon's, Terry's, Silverbob's and all lebbenty-zillion of Elwood's."

Geeminee, no, I didn't realize that. I thot I was being sorta clever—copyrighting, getting feedback and writing lessons....

Pardon me while I commit hara-kiri with a dull mimeo stylus.

\*puncture\* Ssssssss..... (All it does is let air out of my ego!)

So you know what this does to the fiction policy of REG, don't you, dear readers. Yas. Dead. (Must you cheer so loudly?!) To those discerning few who liked my one immortal story last issue, you I will keep informed by mentioning in these pages where it will appear in the heavy professional outlets and where my subsequent sf (and pornography, if any more) will surface.

I am, further, withdrawing the first third of KING OF DEATHS from this issue. Them's the breaks, fans. But it do give me more room in which to noodle in my various cubbyholes. Like, for instance, I've got five books read recently, and they're lined up, panting for review. (And if you've never seen a book pant for review, it's a disgusting sight, believe me.)

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A NARROWING ORBIT

LOCUS #127 reports that ORBIT's option has been picked up by Harper & Row after Putnam dropped the series with #13 (#12 and 13 not yet published).

After reading ORBIT #11 I thought maybe Damon Knight was wreaking revenge on Putnam for discontinuing the series. Oh, all the stories are competent, some more than others. But there is an underlying world view that turns me off.

I was somewhere between a third and halfway through the book when I began to get the message. As I read on I became more and more incredulous. "Not EVERY story?" I thought.

But, yes, almost every story. One doesn't quite fit.

Let me run down the contents page:

Even the blurb writer at Putnam had to describe "Alien Stones" by Gene Wolfe as his 'most enigmatic and compelling story'. It is about an alien ship and its baffling alien crew who invite discovery and who are seemingly invisible.

Wolfe develops the situation, including a murdered-by-the-aliens anthropologist puzzle, but then with his usual infuriating aplomb, cut off the story with major questions unanswered—

ed. He leaves me baffled, feeling stupid and obtuse and resentful.

"Spectra" by Vonda H. McIntyre is a downer of a story about a female human who works in and for a huge electronic complex. She sleeps in a wall tube, is fed by a tube, is drugged, solves problems given to her mind by an electronic helmet which sinks probes into the sockets that have replaced her eyes.... She remembers a happy childhood out in the natural world. Now she is one of thousands who serve the machine. Gray, hopelessness, despair....

In a way Frederik Pohl's "I Remember a Winter" is also downbeat in that with clear-eyed memory he traces his protagonist's life and interactions with others, with events, and shows how tiny incidents can alter a life. We are all of us the results of a million causes. We are beings threading through a constantly shifting maze while being bombarded from every direction. He writes:

"I remember more consequential causes than I can count. When I look inside my skin I don't see anything but consequences; all I am is the causal aftereffects of, item, an unemployed carpenter evicted from his home and, item, a classification clerk who had been in the newspaper game himself once, and all the other itemized seeds that have now blossomed into fifty-two-year-old me."

James Sallis' "Doucement, S'il Vous Plait" is a mocking poetic justice story of a writer too hungry for mail who was turned into a flying dutchman letter, forever being forwarded, forever hoping to be reunited with his family. First person. The life of a letter is not an easy one.

"The Summer of the Irish Sea" is a fine story, a variation of the man-as-prey idea, this time criminals are turned loose in a forested area and hunted for sport. Some avoid death for years. The hunters, of course, necessarily dehumanize them:

"The woman rode up and reined in her mount just as the man screamed.

"Congratulations, Margot, you're the first! He's beautiful, and the trophies are yours, of course."

"God, Edwin, he screamed."

"They always do, dear. You never really get used to it."

"He knew!"

"Nonsense, Margot, nonsense. Why should he be any different from the others? Do you...do you want me to carry them back, love?"

"No, not the cloth, just the...other. I'm...I'm not sure I want it."

"I understand, dearest. You'll change your mind; it's only the letdown after the chase. Just keep telling yourself he was a rapist or something. Dammit, Peter! For God's sake be careful what you're doing with that thing. That's better. Put it in the saddlebag, will you? And don't force it, idiot, you'll tear the ears off."

"Good-bye, Shelley, Shirley, Charlotte, Charlene" by Robert Thurston is a wry tale of perfect love lost, refund, lost again, discovered again...in a series of identical duplicated women who make ideal wives—for a while. The problem is to keep finding those elusive duplicates.

Phil Farmer's "Father's in the Basement" will be reprinted

often through the years and undoubtedly adapted to TV in the next NIGHT GALLERY-type series; it's a perfect little horror story that only a writer could write, about writing.

"Down By the Old Maelstrom" is just about the only story in this book in which a problem is solved and lives are saved. Perhaps what saved it from Damon Knight's rejection is the absurdist (apparently) opening scene's and the trapped-in-a-dream (literally) premise. Edward Wellen wrote it nicely... and left a bit of doubt at the end which must have pushed one of Damon's buttons.

Perhaps I'm being unfair. But the kind of stories Damon likes are Experimental, Absurd, Obscure, Fragments, Enigmas, non-formula...in which there is rarely a conclusive resolution to a story unless it is resolved by death, doom, no-win no-how, and the Gods look down on struggling, puny man and laugh mockingly. Absolutely no hope. Losers all. All downers.

The remaining stories by Gary K. Wolf ("Dissolve"), Edward Bryant ("Dune's Edge"), Jack M. Dann ("The Drum Lollipop"), Gardner R. Dozois ("Machines of Loving Grace"), Dave Skal ("They Cope"), Joe M. Haldeman ("Counterpoint"), Steve Herbst ("Old Soul"), Charles Platt ("New York Times"), John Barfoot ("The Crystallization of the Myth"), Hank Davis ("To Plant a Seed") and Kate Wilhelm ("On the Road to Honeyville") all are good to 'interesting' to fine, but I submit that an entire 20 story collection of depressing, futile, baffling mien is too much. A few of those go a long way.

If this long series of despairing cries in the night is what sf is coming to, if this is literature, then I despair for sf, for it may be traveling the road of 'serious mainstream' writing and may wither in the Little Magazines where it will be pontificated upon by English Professors.

I exaggerate, of course. The ORBIT-NOVA-NEW WORLDS school is only part of sf. It's valuable and, in occasional reads, interesting and entertaining. (Putnam, \$5.95, 1972)

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ODD COMMENTS, NOTES, ITEMS "Harlan Ellison's Hornbook" which is appearing in installments in the LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS is absorbing reading as he does a REG number (if I can phrase it that way) — not quite as intimate, yet more honest in naming names. He is unsparing of self. Why is naked honesty so fascinating? Why are we all so hungry for it?

There were a few good moments in GARGOYLES, a made-for-TV movie, mostly Jennifer Salt's skimpy halters and Woodrow Chambliss as the old desert rat Uncle Willie. There was nothing Cornel Wilde could do about the corny old monster plot or his character's implausible behavior, so he wisely didn't try to do any acting.

Charlie Brown shows a good reviewing style in LOCUS #127, but his succinct analyses of writers and books ("The first section is too slow and simple. The middle section is very good indeed, and the last section doesn't quite explain enough. The middle shows how talented a writer he is, but overall the book is just an interesting failure. The first part should have been tightened and the last expanded.") would set easier with me if he were not so godlike in his judgements...and had

some fiction-writing credits to his name. Mind, I agree with 90% of his opinions, but I resent his Jovian certainty.

I ran off 700 copies of this REG's page 27 last night, as a test of the asterisks-instead-of-dashes section dividers, and lo—no stencil creep or creasing. And the p.27 stencil was a cheap, lightweight Sure-Rite, to boot. So THAT problem is solved. Take note all ye electric Gestetner owners.

I do not like to print things like the notice below, but I'm doing it now for sado-masochistic reasons, I guess.

"Dann R. Lunsford (two n's in Dann) of 3736 Lankershim Way, North Highlands, Sacramento, CA 95660, met a girl who goes by the fan name of 'Sunshine' at a couple of conventions some years back. A few of your readers may be familiar with Dann as the president of P.O.S.I.T.R.O.N., an sf in-group of dubious repute. Dann had become fascinated with Sunshine, but since he was unable to locate her at LACon, he is now rather anxiously looking for her real name and address. If any of your readers know Sunshine, or know of somebody who might know Sunshine, or know of some way he might find her himself, they would be doing him a deep favor if they could send what information they have to Dann at the above address."

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"A peculiar thing about writing is that when you have done it for a great many years, and made a living out of it, you are not satisfied as you thought you would be with merely having been successful at it. I warn you, youngsters, that when you are as old as I am, even if you make many times out of writing what I did, you won't be satisfied unless you put something into that writing which gives you, at long last, when you are bored with publicity and success, and have spent the money you made at it, a sense of personal satisfaction in a job at least mildly well done.

"All that I got into my work, into the novels I wrote, and the short stories I wrote that I'm glad now I put there is the kick from knowing that I made a lot of people laugh, especially laugh at the things of which they had been previously most afraid, like sex, policemen and the church. That, I claim, is doing a real service."

—Jack Woodford, p. 294-95, PLOTTING

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SLEEPWALKER'S WORLD Proudly proclaimed on the cover of this DAW novel by Gordon R. Dickson is this: 'The only SF novel selected by THE NEW YORK TIMES as one of the "Hundred Best Books of the Year."'

I wonder who did the choosing? Because, <sup>while</sup> SLEEPWALKER'S WORLD is admittedly good, a well-written superior-man-saves-the-world sf novel, it is also obviously not the best sf novel of the year if judged by anyone familiar with the field and what has been published so far in 1972—or 1971.

Dickson is a good journeyman writer, which is a nice way of saying top-rank hack. This is not a put-down in my book; it's what I hope I am at the moment in the sex field, and my immediate aim in the sf field. Gordon Dickson deals with familiar formulas and structures in his novels.

This one continues his recent emphasis on a kind of Jungian mass mind or universal unconscious of Man which his heroes

become aware of and call upon in extremis.

A rundown of the story elements is as follows: 'Shafts driven deep into the Earth's hot core utilized that buried energy to run the world's power station. That broadcast energy alone kept the food factories running. Without those factories and that power, the hungry, overpopulated planet could not survive.

'But the cost was high, for the power broadcasts had a terrifying side-effect. While they were on the human race was unable to stay awake.

'Among the rare few with immunity to the sleep compulsion was the astronaut Rafe Arnauld Harald, one of six who had been training on the Moon for the first star voyage. But now, unless humanity could conquer the dark power that was using the sleep phenomenon to paralyze society, that flight might never be made.

'To defeat the unknown masters of the sleeping world, Rafe had only the help of a crippled girl, a wolf with a very special ability, and the unique talents of his own mind and body.'

I liked the wolf, Lucas, better than anyone else; he had true grit.

(DAW Books, #28, 95d)

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ROYFAC I wish I could say the post office lost the letter I am about to publish, and just today delivered it. Ah, no. He wrote it in 1969. September 18, to be exact, and sent it to me for the letter column of SFR. I didn't have room. But I kept it close, out of the files, out of the wastebasket...and it haunted me.

Now I lay the ghost. Now at last Roy Tackett will think well of me again, and I will think better of myself.

"Greetings, Richard—

"If a mere fan may be admitted, briefly, to the eminent presence of the host of professional writers who fill the pages of SFR, I'd like to throw a few things in the pot. I am moved to make some observations on the science fiction field.

"SF is properly considered from a number of viewpoints. but, since the main point of discussion is SF as literature, let's stick to that point of view. For example, Toomey says that science fiction is minor and trivial. And it is. Generally speaking, SF is juvenile, cliched, escape fiction that is poorly written by second-rate writers. It is 25 years behind the times in both literary and scientific concepts. SF is, pure and simple, pulp fiction written by pulp fiction writers.

"Sturgeon has said, "Pulp is a grade of paper." but it is more than that. It is also a style of writing—stereotyped formula stories ground out for 2¢ a word by hack writers to make their bread. And that, for the most part, is science fiction."

((Why should sf be any different than any other genre fiction? For the most part ALL FICTION is stereotyped, formula-ruled, cliched, full of conventions, tried and true—in magazines, books, TV and screen. WHY? Because the mass of readers LIKE IT THAT WAY! And that is not a sneer, it's a

fact of life. And here's a thot: it may be NECESSARY for sf to be full of familiar story elements to compensate for the unfamiliar ideas, the exotic locales, the alien creatures. I suspect that unconsciously a significant portion of sf's readership would stop reading sf if we took<sup>away</sup> their security-blanket formulas and structures and themes which serve as armour against the unfamiliar and unknown which sf serves up. As it is sf "scares" most readers and appeals mostly to young non-conformists and those who are secure enough and those who are abstract thinkers. Science fiction inherently is a limited-appeal fiction. To the extent that sf becomes non-structured and "serious" it will further narrow its appeal and its audience.))

"Let's consider SF writers. The field has produced only one of any stature when measured against all literary standards. Ray Bradbury is the only one with roots in the science fiction field to have won recognition as a major writer. When one discusses the rest it becomes necessary to preface 'writer' with the modifier 'SF'. Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke are generally considered, by people outside the field, to be the giants of Science Fiction. They are first-rate Science Fiction writers. Which is comparable, say, to being judged the best baseball player in the Texas League—no matter what the accolade, it is still a bush league. And that, essentially, is what SF is in the field of literature—a bush league.

"Now periodically writers come along who complain about the restrictions of SF and express their desire to achieve success and recognition (and money, of course) as authors without the 'SF' modifier. Are they going to do it writing Science Fiction? Not likely. Most of today's SF writers grew up in the field. They read it as kids and when they decided to try their own hands at writing they wrote SF very much as they had read it—and became trapped in the ancient and dying literary backwater of the pulps. When they do try their hand at contemporary mainstream fiction the critical clobbering they get usually sends them right back to the SF pond. Many, but not all, of course, of the 'new wave' writers fall into this category. They couldn't make it in the mainstream so they came back to SF where their efforts are looked on as startling by readers conditioned to a diet of straight pulp writing. Others are content to fall back on straight formula stories. After all, it buys the groceries.

"There are successful writers of Science Fiction but they are not 'SF writers'. They are mainstream writers who learned their craft unfettered by the pulp formula."

((By "mainstream" I presume you mean "non-commercial" writing—essentially thematic fiction, character revelation fiction, slice-of-life fiction. We are getting that in sf now. Without the crutch of a strong story structure, though, the writer is on his own and must stand alone—his style and skill and talent alone, all he has with which to grab and hold a reader. Damn few can do it. It's like broken-field running in football.

((But is non-commercial fiction inherently superior to commercial fiction? If so, why?))

"There is, I know, a strong attempt being made by concerned writers in the field, to get SF accepted by the literary

world as a legitimate literary form. I don't think it will be successful. The prejudice of mainstream literary critics is far too strong for SF to really overcome its pulp magazine image and, indeed it will never do that as long as the writers continue to turn out pulp fiction. SF will never be considered first rate until it is written by people who are considered writers without any modifiers and no SF writer is going to be considered first rate as long as he devotes himself exclusively to this field. To be successful the writers are going to have to drop SF and take the plunge into the mainstream. And I really don't think that SF writers are up to it."

((I'm curious, Roy—do you still hold this three year old opinion?))

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B\*E\*W\*A\*R\*E

"Chapter XI. Vice And Its Seducers.

... Bad books and impure pictures are among the first corrupting instrumentalities which debase a young mind. With the former may be ranked the unnumberable novels which are perpetually issuing from unprincipled presses; all kinds of amorous poetry; and a class of filthy books, pretending to be medical, physiological, and instructive, while in reality they are only disgusting stimulants to unholy, prurient desires. Among the latter are those engravings and paintings, whether in books or papers, or on the covers of snuff-boxes, &c., which, from their immodesty, are calculated to defile the mind and call the latent depravity of the heart into action. These vile productions of misdirected art the young man who values his moral character must refuse to see. If they are brought under his notice, he must resolutely turn away his eyes from gazing upon them; for as sure as he takes pleasure in them, he will be undone. So of novels; they must be rejected with invincible determination.

"But are all novels to be eschewed? Are not some of them pure both in style and tendency? To this last question I reply, it is true that some novels are better than others; in themselves they may be unspotted. Yet in one point they do harm; they create a taste for fictitious reading. This taste soon acquires the intensity of a passion. The mind acquires a craving for excitement, and thus the youth, who begins by revelling among the splendid paintings of Sir Walter Scott's pen, or by subjecting himself to the quiet enchantment of Fredrika Bremer's spirit, will speedily seek the works of more impassioned authors. He will hasten from Dickens to James, from James to Bulwer, from Bulwer to Mansworth, from him to Eugene Sue, and finally he will steep his polluted mind in the abominations of that Moloch among novelists, Paul de Kock. By this time he is ready for destruction. By venturing into the pleasant ripple, he has been tempted to sport in the heaving breakers, until, caught by the resistless current, he is borne out to sea, and meets a premature death. How much better to have avoided the ripple! Young man, beware of reading your first novel!

"But alas! this counsel is probably too late. You are already under the spell of the charmer, and can hardly tolerate these censures. Not that you have no doubts concerning

the effects of such reading, but you love it—passionately love it! You demand proof of the evil charged on these works.

"Such proof is to be found in the experience of all novel-readers. Every such person knows that they corrupt the heart, through the imagination. They portray persons, characters and scenes, to the imagination, which, being viewed there, inevitably bestir the lowest propensions of poor, fallen nature. The thief, the blasphemer, the sceptic, the seducer, the gambler,—ideal wretches, whose actual presence in our home would be deemed a disgrace,—are freely introduced into the 'chambers of imagery,' and permitted to utter all their filthy conversations, and to do their disgusting deeds, directly before the mind. Can this be done without impunity? Nay! As well one might hope to handle melted pitch and avoid defilement; for the imagination cannot be polluted by vile images, without causing the heart to give forth depraved eruptions!

"These eruptions may not take place at once. They may delay to show themselves for a time, but the igniting spark is there and only awaits a proper combination of circumstances to break forth. 'Behold a fire smouldering and slumbering amid a heap of cinders. For a time it makes no progress; it dwells in darkness. One would suppose it had made up its mind for extinction. But judge not too hastily. The mass around has been penetrated by the heat, and prepared for its function. The fire has been blending itself with the cinders, and is ready to break out. Stir them once more. Clear them for the draught. Touch them once more, and the whole will break out into a conflagration.' Thus it is with pernicious images in the mind. Their influence permeates the spirit. They fire the heart; they prepare the senses. Then comes the guilty opportunity, and the breath of the tempter. The spark ignites. The soul is in a blaze of passion. The sin is committed. The deed is done: and guilt binds its fearful burden upon the conscience, with chains of triple steel!"

—THE YOUNG MAN'S COUNSELOR: Or, SKETCHES AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DUTIES AND DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN by Rev. Daniel Wise, A.M. (pp. 211-215) (Carlton & Porter, publishers, 1850)

Thanks to Alpajpuri for providing the quote. He notes: "Rev. Daniel Wise comes across considerably more vertiginously than Dr. Fredrik Wertham, but I do sniff a whiff of similarity in the two Doctors.

"What really gets me is, who the hell is Paul de Kock?"

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It's been 122 years since Rev. Wise wrote his book, but the basic premise of his argument lives on: we are born pure, a blank slate, innocent of good and evil, terribly vulnerable to evil outside influences; we must be protected, we must protect others from evil.

"The Devil made me do it!" The oldest copout. It's all in your mind, baby. All that "evil" is built in. We are all born with the capabilities—our brains are grooved that way, and the mind follows (and is) the geography.

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HORRORS!  
12-1-77

R.C. Harbie wrote: "Your miniature epic about VIK was read here with great enjoyment. It may be of some interest to advise that the 'eater snake' therein has a counterpart in real life. See Vol. III, page 160 of POISONOUS AND VENEMOUS MARINE ANIMALS OF THE WORLD by Bruce W. Halstad, H.D.; Government Printing Office, 1970, where under figure numero two appears a cut of a little, white job, about the size and shape of a kitchen match, yclept in Brazil a CANDIRU, and thusly described:

"This small Amazonian caiffish which is commonly called the Candirú has the remarkable ability to penetrate the human urethra. Once the Candirú has entered the urethra it is almost impossible to remove without surgival intervention."

Well, now! Add one more travel tip: when in Brazil always wear a rubber, men. As for the ladies: a tightly fitted menstrual pad. Especially if you're going to swim in the Amazon.

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST  
12-1-72

I mentioned several weeks ago that my right knee was hoiting me when I walked. Minor, but a bug.

It got voice. And voice. Till a counle days ago I decided to go to a doctor and get his arcane opinion.

(The same doctor mother goes to, by the way. Also, by the way, she checked back with him re her blood pressure and he was astounded to find it now 140/70! And sooo it appears that the 'water pills' he gave her work very well. Also, the cortisone tablets are helping her bursitis and painful wrist joint.)

Dr. Myers made me wait damn near an hour. (I read part of Skinner's BEYOND FREEDOM & DIGNITY while waiting, appropriate for a doctor's office—and Jim Blish's book reviews in the Jan. F&SF, just arrived that morning.) In his ~~hoff~~ treatment room he took my story of woe and then examined the offending knee. Prodded it, twisted it, noted I had 'knobby' knees—a condition of bone warpage in childhood I knew nothing about, and finally had a nurse take a X-ray of my knee which showed, a few minutes later, a 'spur' of calcium on the patella (kneecap) and a narrowing of the cartilage in the joint which prevents grating and pain. He calmly called this (perhaps to soothe my ego) a 'pre-arthritis' condition.

Wa-a-a-a! I'm too young to have arthritis! Treatment is stay off it as much as possible, use an elastic bandage, have hot, wet packs three times daily. Said I could ride my bike.

Yesterday the knee felt good, hardly any discomfort (because I took six aspirin for a determined headache, I think) and today it bothered me as I pedeled to the P.O. and back, and when I go up stairs. Otherwise it's better.

I also looked up arthritis in the bible (LET'S GET WELL by Adelle Davis) and she say take lots of vit.E and Panthothenic acid, B-2, C, and protein. I hear and obey. She also mentions prominently the likely psychosomatic cause of most arthritis: repressed anger and rage.

Do I have repressed rage? YES! I was an extremely TENSE child with a weird limp—pigeon-toed and so on. I HATED BEING

'crippled' and inferior! I HATED all who looked at me and saw me that way. I HATED my parents for making me that way! (Logical: an infant's psyche figures he's different and 'crippled' because of something his mother or father did!) And of course I could not show this HATE! RAGE! I bottled it.

And now, with REG, I'm getting even! I'm a reviewer! Aha-ha-ha-ha-haaaa! And I'm a writer of fiction—I rape and kill and am powerful!

The vim, vigor and vitality of REG and TOMB... are rooted in that seething, neurotic little boy.

This is therapy, friends. Without it—even worse psycho-somatic illness.

On the other hand— Somewhere in a previous issue of REG I quoted an article from a newspaper that said if a person suffered an emotional strain, the odds were that he'd suffer a physical illness sometime later, with the odds increasing with the severity of the emotional trauma.

Obviously the emotional turmoil I've been through since I started (and even before) recording my life in REG, especially as shown in REG#2, would qualify me for an illness of some kind, and it may be that my subconscious has chosen an arthritic—PRE-arthritic—knee as a way to physically use up that trauma, if that is the process, or the word to use.

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David B. Williams told me in a letter recently in effect to shit or get off the pot—with respect to making up my mind about how big I want REG to be in circulation and to whom I'm aiming it—the denizens of sf fandom and prodom, the "insiders" as it were who understand my fannish terms and conventions and in-jokes, or do I aim at a greater audience of sf readers by way of advertising and bookstore and library and subscription agency sales?

I've just gotten, within days, a letter from Baker & Taylor, of Momence, Ill. 'Oldest and Largest Book Wholesaler in the United States', and a letter from the Maxwell International Subscription Agency, both of whom are interested in 'the late, great SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW'.

SFR, had I continued it, would now be, easily, into the 3,000 circulation range. A full-time job. It could have been a career and could have paid my salary.

And I've been severely tempted to retitlE REG to THE ALIEN CRITIC—A Science Fiction Review & Personal Journal. It would be a good, commercial, self-explanatory title. I've filled sheets of paper with figures, calculations, etc.

I still stick at the life-decision that would entail. I don't want to work that hard. I do want to write a book a year or so, read a lot of sf, and other stuff, and noodle away in this journal in a highly informal, self-indulgent manner, as now.

So I am chucking these inquiries in the waste basket. And I am, I hope, clanging the coffin lid on the Vision of what SFR Might Have Been, one more time. It takes persistence to bury a dream and keep it buried in favor of another, more attractive, more realistic dream...or life...or image.

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"A publisher I'm advising admitted today that they don't want to put out good books, as their effect on the reader is to make him pause and think: what they are after is the book

that is read and put down, to be replaced instantly by the next book of the same kind. Reading for robots!"

—George Hay, letter 9-11-72

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THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD

Review—12-3-72

This series is losing its charm for me, probably

because Harry Harrison's fast-paced gimmick-loaded s-f adventurer, Slippery Jim di Griz is now too domesticated (hen-pecked and pussy-whipped) by his wife-knows best spouse, lovely Angelina.

AND this kind of incredible James Bondish fiction quickly palls. In this book Slippery Jim becomes instantly involved in a to-the-death struggle with an arch-fiend named He. He is out to rule the world, past, present and future, and considerable time-hopping is involved in the battle.

The adventure is captivating, inventive and fun...for a while. But it drags on and on. Harrison went to the well once too often. It's like a serial—one narrow escape and close shave after another: capture, escape, attack, frustration, chase, capture, escape....

I found myself bothered by Jim's reliance on drugs: he was forever popping uppers to keep going, or relying on emergency super-drugs for brief moments of super-strength or, in his need to be able to kill He, a highly illegal drug that dissolves the conscience and gives God-like illusions of power and certitude (arch thief and con man di Griz draws the line at killing except in self-defense). Some hero!

(Putnam, \$5.95)

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

12-4-72

Ball freezing cold this morn. I filled a bucket with warm water and went out back to kick the ice

(solid) from the bird bath and refill it. Also poured some into the bowl beside the house used by thirsty dogs. Somehow, during this good samaritan chore, I lifted the damn bucket the wrong way, swung it across my body the wrong way, or something, because my sacro went DUANG and I'm crippled up again, moving v-e-r-y carefully, wincing a lot, and convinced I'm an old man before my time.

My right knee is feeling mucho better, though. Warm wet heat has helped, I suppose, and I hope also the vitamin regimen. I broke down and had a cup of coffee this afternoon, though.

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MAIL

12-4-72

Contracts from Brandon Books for DEMON'S WIFE.

They want to buy all rights for \$1,000. I made some changes—all rights revert to me after 3 years, and a 4%/6% royalty schedule. Will send back to Larry with a light-hearted little note. We'll see what happens. I'd like to do the book, but not on an all-rights purchased basis. That kind of deal is maybe okay for a pot-boiler porn book which has no future, but Brandon is the 'prestige' line for them and is showing signs of life. Besides, Larry wants the book done quiet and convincing, rather than sensational, which is more work.

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BOOKS RECEIVED RECENTLY

The above reviewed THE STAINLESS

STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD (Putnam, \$5.95); ALPH by Charles Eric Maine (Ballantine 02904-6, \$1.25); EVENOR by George MacDonald (Ballantine 02874, \$1.25); WOLF/WINTER by Thomas Burnett Swann (Ballantine 02905-4, \$1.25); TO CHALLENGE CHAOS by Brian M. Stapleford (DAW #7, 95¢); THE REGIMENTS OF NIGHT by Brian M. Ball (DAW #19, 95¢); MIRROR IMAGE by Michael G. Coney (DAW #31, 95¢); THE GOD MAKERS by Frank Herbert (PUTNAM, \$5.95); THE LISTENERS by James E. Gunn (Scribners, \$6.95); BEST SF-1971, edited by Harry Harrison and Brian W. Aldiss (Putnam, \$5.95).

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

12-5-72

Before I mailed back the contracts for DEMON'S WIFE, I slit the end of the envelope, withdrew the

pages, inserted carbons, and added more provisions, specifically in the area of TV, foreign book reprint rights, movie rights, and etc., specifying a 60/40 author/publisher split.

This act of unheard of (for me) uppityness boggles my mind, but blame it on the recent SFWA material I've read. No more signing away all rights to my porno books, even when I think there's no possible added money in their future. You never can tell.

Of course, I'm aware that I may have killed the sale of DEMON'S WIFE to Brandon. The point is, I'd feel ripped off and self-loathing if I did the book for a straight \$1,000. Doing it 'quiet and convincing' with heavy erotic but not blatant and offensive impact is a matter of skill and time, and it's worth more than \$1,000. Besides, a couple of my books for Brandon in the past have had movie nibbles; one, BONGO BUM, netted \$500 option money. So I have good reason to balk.

Brandon's contract policy changes almost from year to year.

THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL... Like 18 to 26 degrees—with 26 the high. Snow. Up to 55 mph winds from the Columbia Gorge, the kind that can do a prefrontal lobotomy and a vasectomy on a man without his knowing it within five minutes. A nose or an ear will drop off in seconds. The chill factor in such a wind is cryogenic.

This is the morning of the 6th. The roads are a free-for-all skating rink. Somehow I don't believe I will saddle up the Schwinn this A.M. and go to the post office.

A YOUNG PUSSY SLEPT WITH ME LAST NIGHT... And the night before that, too. She likes to try to kiss me, but I push her away. Fetid breath.

A day or so after Halloween mother discovered a little cat hanging around with a half a tail, the stump bleeding. She fed it, nursed it a bit, fed it, fed it, fed it.... It hung around, naturally. It's almost pure alley-cat persian, with a beautiful ruff of fur and malevolent yellow eyes. It has been sleeping outside somewhere, but with the onset of this vicious cold weather we "allowed" it inside. For some reason the little woman likes me and insists of sitting on my lap and sleeping with me.

Well, that's proper, since Chin, our male Siamese, sleeps with mother.

RECENT FANZINES RECEIVED

LOCUS continues to be indispensable to the sf field; fan and pro. 1450 print run now, and climbing. There is a point where it becomes practical to switch from mimeo to offset. I'm sure Charlie and Dena Brown will find it, perhaps soon.

Charlie continues to review with authority.

LOCUS is 12/\$3.00 from 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, CA 94116. Rating: 9.

TITLE #9, from Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Drive, St. Louis, MO 63131, 4/\$4.00. Continues to be an interesting mixture of columns and articles, with letters printed by subjects and categories. Easy reading. Rating 6.

ECCE, 1972. Edited by Roger D. Sween, published by his apparently pretentious front, The Index Company, 465 Division St., Platteville, Wisc. 53818. 15¢ for this first issue. 100 copies were run off the spirit duper. Next issue ECCE goes quarterly, costs 75¢ or \$3.00 per year. It will be a serious sf fanzine with some amateur fiction, articles, letters, etc. Rating of #1: 4.

ANANT, edited by Penny Hansen, 1607 Lincolnwood, Urbana, ILL 61801. 25¢. Awkward but sincere editorial, reviews and a fair letter column. I had to hunt for the zine's title. Fine Gaughan cover illo: working sketches of British costumes circa Alfred the Great—a spy scene in moonlight. Rating: 3.

CARANDAITH #7, edited by Alpajpuri, Box 69, Ocean Park, WA 98640. \$1.00. A superior, non-conformist fanzine, stapled a la an Ace Double: articles and columns going one way, and the editorial and long letter column proceeding inward from the other end, and upside down. Lots of graphics and very fine artwork by Jim Schull, Tim Kirk, Doug Lovenstein, Bill Rotsler, Grant Canfield, Cathy Hill, Jay Kinney. Purple ink, brown ink on gray paper... A strange, mocking montage of cultural drek divides the two sections.

The outstanding written item is George Barr's discussion of art, fandom and prodom, and their interrelationships.

Arnie Katz, fan historian, writes an admittedly biased (in favor of fannishness) analysis of a period of fan publishing which included as landmark zines, HEIKAS, ODD, and PSYCHOTIC/SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. It's titled: "The Beanie and the Dollar Sign: An Insurgent Looks at Eighth Fandom." He doesn't like big circulation semi-pro fanzines. Hang him.

I recommend CARANDAITH SEVEN. Rating: 9.

WASTE PAPER #5,#6 from Grant Canfield, 28 Atalaya Terr., San Francisco, CA 94117. Free if you write an obscene letter of comment, otherwise \$1.00. W.P. is produced on a surreptitious xerox machine by Grant's wife, Cathy. Send her a banana. Grant cobbles the issues together from letters and witty sayings and sage observations. Rating: Incredible.

Ed Cagle has succumbed and has published a fanzine. As with most new fanpubbers he chose a horrible title: KWALHICQUA. Included in this first issue is a story about a child who fell into an outhouse hole and live to be a success in the world. It's called "The Putty of Childhood is the Concrete of maturity." And Dee Gace wrote it. K—— is an odd-ball little fanzine. Ed wants reaction, not money. Send

him a firecracker. Ed Cagle, Route #1, Leon, KS 67074.

AMOEBOID SCUNGE #4 sounds like an obscene discharge of precious bodily fluids. Actually, it's a letter substitute/personalazine from Jay Cornell, Jr., 105 E. Wilson, MSU, E. Lansing, MI 48823.

Interesting, short and sweet. RATING: Send more.

And that's enough of the recent fanzines for a few days.

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OUR LOYAL PUBLIC ~~XXXXXXXX~~ MASTERS

"I seem to recall getting REG #3 about the time I was mailing out MOEBIUS TRIP #15. I was in a bad mood those days since the boys at the Post Office had held up two days of my mailing and I had to go downtown and bail out the zine. They had ripped open Terry Jeeves' envelope, after first cutting (presumably) the heavy cord binding it both ways. In the light of what I learned later, however, it's not too farfetched to think that they may have bitten through the cord. The long side flap of the envelope had of course been tucked in and it would have been ridiculously easy for them to have pulled it out — instead they (instinctively, one imagines) simply tore the thing apart, almost in two.

"There were a few rounds with the Mailing Requirements Clerk, then back to the P.O. offices for the main event, with the Superintendent of Mails. (I'd been assured that it'd do no good to see the latter since they had never yet changed their minds on such matters.) I talked to the Super for about an hour, my main purpose being to get as much info as possible, to learn just how far they were prepared to go, etc.

"I already knew that MI was not going to be permitted to go as a 'book' — it must be 3rd Class Printed Matter rates, which as you know had just been substantially increased. No 'X' or similar mark, handwritten or rubber-stamped, could be included (to show expired subs and the like) without adding 8¢ postage for 'first class enclosure'.

"I could go on and on with the info I gathered, and perhaps will later in MI. What is really astonishing, though, are the criteria arbitrarily set forth by the local PO for 'books': Nothing mimeographed, the Super emphatically asserted, can be considered as being printed, and hence cannot meet the requirements for a book. Furthermore, he was equally positive that a book is only produced from movable type, just like Gutenberg did it, and no other way. Also, anything stapled cannot be a book. Even gummed spines aren't eligible — one has to use cord, thread, etc. This will give you an idea of how much I enjoyed talking to this buffoon.

"At one point I maneuvered him into the position of stating his requirement for 'printed pages' for a book, then saying my zine had to go as 'printed matter' — in effect he'd contradicted himself. I did eventually get a good clue to this imbecilical attitude of the Postal Service: an allusion was made to the concessions obtained by the union, with a broad hint that one result was to get as many pieces of 'printed matter' as possible into the category of the highest rate.

"You, Geis, may be next. Or the next after the next.

This Postal Service has the country divided up into different sections, each of which has (I was assured by the Super), to a certain extent, its own interpretation of the rules. But crap, as the old-timers used to say, has a way of spreading from one opening to the next. So be prepared for anything!"  
—Ed Connor, letter 11-28-72

Aside from the "printed matter" idiocy, MOEBIUS TRIP is a periodical and thus must go as third class or second class. Why not unschedule MT, declare it a series of books, and try him again? As a matter of fact, I'm going to take preventive action with this ~~\*\*\*\*~~ volume of REG. From now on I'm a book publisher. I'm not accepting subscriptions, I'm taking advance orders. If necessary, I'll even get a business license to do business as REG PUBLISHING CO. And there's no law against a book publisher scheduling, say, four books a year....

But, Ed, to really bug the man, if you have a mailing of 250 or more in the U.S., apply for a 3rd Class bulk mailing permit, early in the year. If you have five or more mailings during the calendar year you'll recover the \$45. cost of the permit and save a significant amount. Of course you have to sort and bundle your pieces by zip, according to P.O. rules, but it's no great chore and the P.O. does have Customer Relations men to advise and help. Use the system to beat them.

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L"\*\*\*2" \*Glug\* 12-5-72: From Michael Izak: "I guess you may be interested in knowing this: SCIENCE FICTION STORY INDEX, 1950-1968, by Frederick Siemon, \$3.50, by American Library Assoc."

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"By now you've probably heard that I'm no longer with Lancer. I would very much appreciate it if you would keep sending me REG, at my home address. There are only three fanzines that interest me at all these days — LOCUS and YANORO are the other two.

"You should keep receiving review copies of the s-f titles from Lancer. If you don't, drop a note to John Holt, Executive Editor — the only editor there now. (Even though there is a staff of four). I don't think he has time to read fanzines, so you can save a copy —together we were doing 80% of the list, and now he's doing my job as well as his...."

—Bob Hoskins, letter 12-4-72

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WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE David Gerrold, a bright new star  
WITH A FINGER IN MY I in the s-f heaven, is a....

He's pretty damn good, is what he is. My impression is that he's got all the tools and he's having fun using them, experimenting, perfecting. He is also well aware of commercial considerations. He's a pro, not at base an amateur.

HARLIE was sutured together from short stories and novell-ets that appeared in GALAXY and/or IF. The seams don't show. The story of HARLIE the self-aware computer and his struggle for life is realistic and convincing...in fact, Gerrold makes all that near-future computer technology seem matter-of-fact. And that takes skill and talent.

The conversation between HARLIE and psychologist and re- -36-

search chief David Auberson are fascinating, as are the crises as corporation freebooters, lusting to loot the company, attempt to scrap HARLIE for tax benefits, etc.

Gerrold felt he had to bring in a boy-meets-girl, losef-girl, gets-girl sub-plot via Auberson's emotional needs and hangups, and it is in the long conversations with HARLIE about love, sex, "being human", etc. that the novel drags. Gerrold has a tendency to preach and lecture sometimes. He wants to help his readers solve their problems. Admirable, but it gets in the way.

WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE is one of the better sf novels of the year. (Sf Bookclub, Ballantine 02885-6, \$1.25.)

WITH A FINGER IN MY I is a collection of Gerrold's short fiction—experimental, intriguing, infuriating.

His dedication reads: "This book is for my mother and Harvey. Now will you stop telling me to go out and get an honest job?"

Reminds me of my aunt Bobbie who, upon seeing me sprawled in a chair reading an sf book, will invariably say, "Aren't you supposed to be working? (at the typewriter)"

The most controversial or provocative story in the collection is "In the Deadlands." A long free-form poem that works, that is haunting, that puzzles, that grips your mind, that leaves you with Questions. What is the deadlands, why does it gradually spread like an orange and black cancer of mutated marble, why are the Kafkaesque soldiers sent out on those nightmare patrols, and why do they consent?

Gerrold hints at answers.... Something big lives in the heart of the deadlands, and someday it won't be satisfied with the small sacrifices of "lost" patrols, and someday it will come out....

It's a temptation to say "In the Deadlands" is pretentious. It's different, and I admire Gerrold for it. He grabs you, holds you, steeps you in slowly accumulating horror... and by using this poetic, free-form narrative technique at once defeats himself, partially, by making the reader conscious of the "arty" style and hence of the writer. But any radically different word technique is inherently a "look-at-me" and provokes inevitable thoughts of author affectation. Can't be helped.

WITH A FINGER IN MY I is an interesting, well-worth-it collection. (Ballantine 02645-4, 95¢)

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THE PLUNGE by Fritz Hamilton is a powerful, gutty poem about a man killing himself by drinking, grieving for a lost love. The oldest story in the world, but Fritz Hamilton has been there and he's a fine poet.

It begins:

I.

Dear Jenene  
It's true  
The child is bigger than the man  
It races through me with  
A small toy spade  
Digging holes  
And I in turn  
Cover up the pain with vodka  
Now come

Catch my child  
Hold him in your lap and I  
Shall love you like a man

The poem seems autobiographical. On the title page  
of the booklet is:

(drafted Feb-Mar, 1972  
at Read State Mental  
Hospital and at Wheaton,  
finished June, 1972,  
in Chicago)

The process of suicide by drink is graphically presented:

VIII.

Depression so great  
Alcohol  
Won't work any more  
Sick  
Whole insides wracked  
Gagging  
On the vodka  
Still  
Belting it down  
Alone too long  
Without you  
Without anybody  
Without myself really  
No control  
Drinking  
On borrowed money  
Eating nothing  
Plunging  
Toward death  
Great tradition  
Of Behan and Dylan  
Going  
Gentle into that good night  
Seeking  
The blackness and the peace  
Where are you  
Where is anybody  
Where is myself  
The darkness sweeping  
Toward me

And then, before the section titled "Hospital", this:

XIII.

Dear Jenene  
the walls  
Crushing  
the walls  
Plastered with dead images  
the walls  
The phone/ cry  
the walls  
"HELP!"

In the hospital the poet is strapped down, is screaming,  
needs to piss, needs to die... He describes life in the in-  
stitution: boredom, waiting for food or medication, sleep.

Then, a bad night and a turning point:

V.

The night  
Is creeping rats here  
In the mental ward  
Between the moments of the sleep and tears  
Thoughts of escape  
Below zero outside I understand  
I don't care  
I'd go out naked  
Take me yards of running before  
I'd freeze to death  
Lie scared thinking  
That they'll strap me down again  
My price for recalcitrance  
Hand shaking  
Still suffering from the excess booze  
Old man in bed beside me  
Snot  
Clinging to his mustache  
Spittle  
From his beard  
Sounds  
Of death issuing from his nostrils  
No more booze for me, brother  
If  
I can ever get through this thing

He is released, but his torch burns on. Every stanza  
turns on Jenene, Jenene...

In the first "Epilogue" he is living in his father's  
basement, over another binge, tormenting himself still.

The last few stanzas are songs of gratitude to:

You  
Who are everybody beautiful  
Who  
Have mothered me through a dying love  
Have brought me through my benders  
Have held me through madness

You  
My inner-love  
The flower garden and  
The warm spring sun....

And then---

... the drink and ...

And  
Without you, Jenene  
Dying  
Would be tolerable

... the next drink and ...

Dear Jenene  
Dearest Jenene

... the next and ...

Darling Jenene

... the next the next ...

"Epilogue II" is a cold, tombstone-like finish. The poor fucker got what he wanted.

THE PLUNGE is published by Zetetic Press, POB 6, Folsom, CA 95630. No price is shown, but 50¢ seems fair.

This poem got to me. I didn't intend to quote it so extensively when I began this review. It sends a bucket way down deep into me and brings up gallons and gallons of mawdlin snuffles of self-pity and yearning. Ahh, poor little Dicky. \*snurfle\* Down C—, down, I say!

Okay, let's wipe my nose and get on with it.

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TWO BOOKS RECEIVED RECENTLY: Signet Special, ST. GEORGE AND THE GODFATHER by Norman Mailer; and THE I.Q. MERCHANT by John Boyd, from Weybright & Talley.  
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I TELL YOU FOUR TIMES: CONSPIRACY! CONSPIRACY! CONSPIRACY! CONSPIRACY!

Last issue I reviewed Gary Allen's NONE DARE CALL IT CONSPIRACY and outlined his view that a loose group of superrich individuals and families and corporations and their witting and unwitting agents, are engaged in a plan/plot/conspiracy to centralize power in this country and other industrialized countries, and gradually merge them into a United States of the World which on the surface will be a republic or democracy in structure but in reality will be a dictatorship of the Insiders, as is the United States now almost completely. Nixon is their man in the White House. He is a member of the clique.

An incredible number of high-ranking policy-making government leaders (Vissinger, Rogers, Arthur Burns, and almost 100% of the secretaries of Army, Navy, Airforces and their under-secretaries, the cabinet officers, advisors, ambassadors, many senators, representatives) are members of the Council on Foreign Relations, an internationalist group who staff the key government posts, year in and year out. The CFR is dominated/ruled by the Rockefeller fortune. David Rockefeller is Chairman of the Board of the CFR.

Allen asserts it is no accident that more and more power accumulates in the federal executive. It is part of a long-range design. The superrich Insiders are moving, faster and faster, toward world rule.

NONE DARE CALL IT CONSPIRACY is a short exposition of this view, but is meagre in background, detail and documentation.

Gary Allen's book, RICHARD NIXON—THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK (Western Islands, \$2.00, paperback, 433 pp.) is a much deeper, comprehensive, step-by-step analysis of the Insiders.

He may be right. And many readers may feel a world-wide hidden dictatorship wouldn't be too bad a thing—at least an atomic war would be avoided, and for all the evils, there would be some compensating goods, like world planning.

Nixon's current centralization of federal power in a few White House "secretariates" and his reducing his cabinet to subservience to these White House aides, is a signpost.

A 30-billion dollar deficit and extension of wage-price controls is another.

In RICHARD NIXON, Gary Allen shows clearly, circumstantially, how big internationalist money has governed Nixon's career. The links between Mitchel-Nixon-Kissinger-Rockefeller are especially damning. Coincidence can't go that far.

Allen makes a good case. Our government is a sham; wealth calls the tune.

BUT—

Mae Brussell, in her long, detailed, circumstantial article in THE REALIST (August, 1972, #93) raises the conspiracy of a secret power group of fascists in this country who work through the CIA, FBI, army intelligence, etc. to control the U.S. by means of money and political assassinations, spying, etc. They killed John Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and lately engineered the assassination attempt on George Wallace to insure the re-election of Nixon.

She gets down into the nitty-gritty of dirty deals, subversive power, illegality, brute force. Her article is frivolously titled, "Why Was Martha Mitchell Kidnapped?" It traces the men who were caught bugging the Demo headquarters at the Watergate, the secret fund of at least 10 million to re-elect Nixon, and links them all into a web that has a past, present and future:

"The rise of Richard Nixon in the United States was carefully planned.

"An illegal attitude toward the Versailles Treaty allowed American financiers to feed and support Germany's illegal rearmament."

(Gary Allen shows that American and British financiers funded the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.)

"Hundreds of political assassinations related to minority races, labor leaders, spokesmen against Fascism have taken place in the United States since World War II. In 1963 the political assassination of President John Kennedy in Dallas became necessary for our own, hidden, clandestine government to maintain control. The candidate for President in '68, Robert Kennedy, was murdered by the same people on the night of his victory in election primaries.

"Richard Nixon, front man and leader of this illegal government, mistaken for comical by the intellectuals, was administered the oath of President of the United States on January 20, 1969.

"Military and industrial fanatics felt deprived and defeated when John Kennedy would not make war with the Soviet Union as late as 1961."

"Two years later, in Dealey Plaza, John Kennedy was murdered. He feared the hidden government behind his back, publicly stating he wanted 'to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds.' The day our President was murdered, the streets of Dallas were filled with posters and handbills proclaiming him a traitor. This was the same motivation for illegal assassinations and killings in pre-Nazi and Nazi Germany.

"The Warfare State was set free, following November 22, 1963, to show its ugly face. The war in Asia began to escalate, with no noticeable provocations, only three weeks after the murder of President Kennedy."

"Richard Nixon, like Adolph Hitler, is a patchwork quilt. Both men represent the sum total of all murders, secret plans, behind-the-scene covert imaginations that created their existence. They were hand-sewn and design-

ed by identical masters. It was a community project between persons from Nazi Germany and the United States military and intelligence agencies.

"They are in power today, continuing mass murders, political assassinations. Industrial giants scrape the bottom of the ocean, the surface of the moon, the face of the earth for oil, gold, minerals, resources within their grasp."

Mae Brussell's conspiracy is based in fascism, while Gary Allen's structure is based on a more grand, world-wide conspiracy of amoral men and corporate entities who wish to impose a socialist dictatorship on the planet while controlling the dictatorship from behind the scenes.

It is not impossible to tie the two views together, to reconcile them— Thus, the most powerful, inner circles of the Establishment found John Kennedy unwilling to do their bidding. He of course was a member of the CFR, and shared the overall goal of world rule, but differed in tactics. The Dulles brothers (CFR) helped get rid of him. Johnson was more amiable to taking orders.

But after a few years the inner clique found that Kennedy had been right after all. They forced Johnson to quit, killed Robert Kennedy because they didn't like his domestic policy plans (and he may have been a rebellious upstart, to boot), and put in Nixon whom they'd kept waiting in the wings. Nixon knows the score and the plan. Under him, a supposedly conservative President, ever-greater centralization of power continues and in fact accelerates, the economy is primed for a crash which will require even greater controls, and the stage is set for the next Great Man who will lead the country...to the final stage—an Atlantic Union with Europe which will in effect rule the world.

THAT'S PRETTY CLEVER—

BUT—

In the November 17, 1972 issue of THE LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS there is an interview with Leslie Waller, the author of THE SWISS BANK CONNECTION. Helen Koblin did the interview.

Primarily, THE SWISS BANK CONNECTION (Signet Q5244, 95¢) is about the way the mafia sends its loot to Switzerland banks where it is "laundered" and brought back to this country to be invested in legitimate business channels. The wages of sin is respectability.

The mafia were having some trouble in New York with Robert M. Morgenthau, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York State; he was actually trying to stop the money traffic and crack down on underworld czars. But not to worry—when Nixon got into office in 1969, Morgenthau was replaced, and the mafia's undercover investments in Nixon had paid off.

Yes, Waller says Nixon is just another politician with underworld connections who is on the take (in an untraceable way).

In the interview, Waller says: "Ralph Salerno, New York City Police Department's top expert on organized crime, stated a couple of years ago, 'Someday, the Mob will put a man in the White House, and he won't know it till they hand him the bill.' I feel that Nixon's the one. There's no question in

my mind that he is our first Mob President."

Waller thinks Nixon made his first connections with the Mob very early, in 1940, when he was a small town lawyer in a remote suburb of L.A. Waller thinks the first connection was Bugsy Siegel. The second was when Nixon went to Havana in 1940 and met...

"Havana was controlled at that point by Meyer Lansky, the childhood friend and syndicate buddy of Bugsy Siegel..." Nixon was in Havana three or four weeks making business connections. We think that's where he met Bebe Rebozo.

"We know that at that point Charles 'Bebe' Rebozo was a filling station attendant, very active in the Batista-Lansky operation in Cuba. We know that Dick's first job was in the tire rationing division of OPA in 1941. We also know that Bebe's first million was made in tire recapping in 1941 and

"Then Dick went into the Navy. And from there we know what his political career was."

Somehow I doubt that a filling station attendant was very important to the Meyer Lansky operation in Cuba...unless he filled tanks with black market gas. Yes, that would make him "active". Waller seems to be reaching a bit there.

Waller is on more solid circumstantial ground in his response to Koblin's question: "What has Nixon done for the Mob, now that he's in the White House?"

He replies: "About three things. The first thing was to kill the legislation that was to have made it illegal to export cash to Switzerland, and bring it back anonymously. He, Kleindeinst, and Rossides of the Treasury Department pulled the rug out from under this bill that was introduced by Bob Morgenthau of New York City, a U.S. attorney and Congressman Wright Patman of Texas, and was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Proxmire. It came out a very anemic version that had no teeth in it, and doesn't do anything."

"The second thing he did was to fire Bob Morgenthau. Bob had a record as being THE single U.S. attorney in the country who had ever made any inroads against the Mob. He had wreaked havoc with the leadership of the five families of the New York-New Jersey area. And they still haven't recovered three years after the firing of Morgenthau.

"The third thing that I can document is Nixon's freeing of James Riddle Hoffa, who was the top go-between between organized crime and organized labor, with two-thirds of his sentence yet to be served. It is conceivable that a man could be put into the White House for that one purpose alone."

Note: Waller asserts that Frank Sinatra has had strong Mob connections since his teen-age days. Sinatra and Spiro Agnew are lately the best of friends. Spiro has been cultivating a new "statesmanlike" image and has ambitions to be next President. With a little help from his friends....

The extent of Waller's Mob-control conspiracy beliefs is shown in this quote:

"Are you saying then that there is a collaboration between not only military and industrial empires of this country, but also the criminal empire?"

"Yes. There is a link between organized crime and the establishment at every level of our society. At the low end

we see it when the union members of a Mob-controlled construction company beat up on peace pickets." (Note: Nixon just appointed the boss of that union, coincidentally, to be his Secretary of Labor.) "In the middle, you see it mainly through the institution of political parties. At the highest level, you see it in relation to diplomats, statesmen and generals and the big masterminds of international crime who have to protect their interests of gun-peddling, drug-smuggling networks, etc."

How do we reconcile this conspiracy with the others? Is Nixon taking orders from the international Insiders of great wealth and power, the American fascists of the second-level military-industrial-intelligence complex; or the Mob? All three?

Are the fascists and the Mob allies of the Insiders, or are they other, lesser power structures that are allowed to operate as long as their interests and activities do not seriously interfere with those of the mighty Insiders?

Is it likely that Nixon is given a free hand to run the country and be corrupt as long as certain things are accomplished and certain key appointments of CFR men are made to specific government posts? It tracks. In many ways the Presidency is a figurehead position if the key Presidential advisors and aides are CFR men. They actually run the government, make policy, lower level appointments, and "guide" the President. Nixon is a CFR man himself, so no problem, since he either agrees with current CFR policy or has sense enough not to oppose it.

It comes down to who has the last word in a crunch. I'd bet the Rockefellers, the Rothschilds, etc. are the ones who make the final offers NOBODY refuses.

#### THE FOURTH CONSPIRACY?

WOULD YOU BELIEVE....

"Witches were the bane of all social order; they injured not only persons but property. They were, in fact, as has been previously emphasized, the active members of a vast revolutionary body, a conspiracy against civilization. Any other save the most thorough measures must have been unavailing; worse, they must have but fanned the flame."

---Rev. Montague Summers, introduction to the 1928 edition of THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger.

Probably few people not familiar with the culture and history of the Middle Ages can appreciate the overriding concern and obsession witchcraft, sorcery, the devil, etc. had for the people of the times.

Those in power were concerned with witches and warlocks and dark powers, spells and enchantments because their rivals and political enemies often bought the aid of Evil and Magik in efforts at revolution and overthrow.

The lower classes were "brainwashed" into believing the witches among them were responsible for most of their troubles.

Every power structure used witchcraft as excuse for failures and excuse for excesses in searching for and finding the evil ones.

Witches were the active members---the "radicals"---of the

political, cultural and religious underground. They existed. They were secret. They had rituals and unholy practices. They often believed in the Devil because they believed in God. The Devil was the Godfather of their time.

It suited the authorities of the times to label witchcraft a conspiracy when actually it was a brew of discontent and opposition in every area of life.

Rev. Summers, writing in 1927, was a fundamentalist, a supporter of dogma and those in power. In his long introduction he showed he had the mind of a medieval conservative...and why not? He believed in God---and thus had to believe in the Devil...and Devil worshippers.

The authors of THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM were two very religious men with high intelligence and great dedication. The book goes into great legalistic and doctrinal detail in deciding who is a witch, the degrees of the crime, the procedures for trial and questioning, the fine distinctions that must be made, and the punishments involved. Kramer and Sprenger were honored for their erudition and skills and especially for their zeal in rooting out witches and in their disposition of witches and lesser members of the evil underground.

The book is a manual, a guide, an instruction book. It was copied and distributed widely. (Dover \$3.95)

Was witchcraft actually a conspiracy? Did the covens communicate and have a master plan? Did they welcome medieval malcontents and use them to subvert the status quo? Did they want to bring down civilization?

Are the Insiders, the fascists, the communists, the Mob, the hippies of today the facade behind which even now lurks the hidden face of the oldest conspiracy? Is the Devil behind all our troubles? Is Evil inborn in Man, or imposed? Are you taking me seriously?

That last question is a copout. I do believe in a modified version of the Insiders/CFR power locus: they do have immense power and probably are working toward a world government which they will control in the manner they control our government---loose control, a tolerance for surface and non-effective dissent. They won't take over and rule visibly; better to use dispensable politicians for those glory/blame on-stage positions.

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FAN MAGAZINES AGAIN---OR YET

We have had nearly two weeks of sub-freezing weather, seven inches of can't-melt snow, and yesterday, today, so far this morning, freezing rain that has lain a slippery sheet of ice over everything...

Yet the mail goes through and the fanzines arrive. O hail to the great Urge to Publish. I am mortally infected with that dread disease myself. (They shoot horses, don't they?)

In no particular order, for no particular reason, I grab from the fanzine tray and gaze with a wense of sunder at a lovely Jim Shull fannish cartoon cover on Mike Glycer's sixth PREHENSILE.

I could say PRE is SFR & ENERGUMEN in a clever lower-class disguise, and I will. That's a compliment. Except for having the contents page on the backcover, PRE might pass for SFR

in SFR's early 40's issues...except that Mike double columns using an elite instead of a tall micro-elite like this.

Purely as an aside, I've often wondered why other fans haven't bought these fine micro-elite Olympias—you get 45 to 70% more text per page, highly legible, and the Olympia is a quality West German machine, built to last a lifetime. Of course, they do cost around \$300. for an office machine, manual. But if you're a FIAWOL fan, cost is no object.

But back to Glycer's Glory; PRE shows further improvement in layout (even a bit of jape at layout freaks), a good variety of articles and columns...yes, a top-ten fanzine, slightly sloppy, not nearly the immaculate production of the Glocks...ah, sohns...sihns, or of Bill Bowers, but adequate, legible. It's the emerging BMfish personality that counts.

I'm spending too much space on PRE. Rating: 7½. From: Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342. 35¢.

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I INTERRUPT THE FANZINES... to mention a package I just got from Dick Eney, our man in Vietnam who is fighting for Land Reform in the name of all that's Nixon and Thieu. Anyway, the package was stained all over with daubs and splatters of red paint (blood, see?) and it contained a Christmas gift (the inner wrapper was pretty blue gift-wrap paper). A note inside said: "The idea is amusing—but now let's see if you have the nerve to use it!"

The idea was a slogan I proposed for the American Cancer Society (in REG #2, I think...or #3). So Dick had a rubber stamp made up and that is the gift. It stamps:

IF YOU MUST SMOKE  
...smoke pot!  
American Cancer Society

Gee, thanks, Dick. Thoughty of you. I'll use it to decorate all my letters. I hope you had a merry Christmas and a safe New Year. I'll put in a good word for you with my friends in the Cong. (Show them a copy of REG, Dick; it's a ticket to the nearest plane home.)

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HANDY STENCIL HINT— I'm using a thrice-used film on this stencil, as an experiment. No problem. So now I can buy at least 2 no-film quires of stencils at \$1.90 for every quire with film at \$2.50. Saving\$.

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MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE FANZINE PATCH... ALGOL #19 is a metamorphosed fanzine that now is a viable "little" magazine suitable for upper echelon newsstands everywhere. In every city and town there is at least one newsstand that carries the leftish and ecological reviews and intellectual stuff. ALGOL 19—A Magazine About Sciencefiction, with its covers by Vincent DiFate in hot magenta and its cover blurb: "This Issue: Ray Bradbury, Dick Lupoff, Ted White, Frederick Pohl, Robert Silverberg, Marion Z. Bradley" and its "75¢" price...is a professional job and worthy of display. If Andy Porter, editor and publisher, had the distribution into these newsstands and into college bookstores, he could likely sell 5,000 of this issue and build a ever-growing subscription list. His six-monthly schedule

gives him plenty of time for experiments in advertising and distribution.

Marion Zimmer Bradley's analysis of where and why sf is where it's at today is solid stuff. Worth the price of the mag.

P.O. Box 4175, New York, NY 10017. 4 issues: \$3.  
Rating: 7½.

Al Snider has injected some money into CROSSROADS after having let it lay in a corner for these many months while he pursued a career as a debater on the college debating team circuits and became a debating coach. The most interesting item in this revived, photo-offset, 20 page issue (#13) is the long editorial by Al describing his life as a top-rank dialectician. (Al & Sally Snider, H-2 370 Central, Orange, N.J. 07050. Sample issue: 75¢. Rating: 6 Overpriced.

Umph. I reached for another fanzine to review and STANLEY #13 fell to my desk. It is a publication of the Cepheid Variable Science Fiction Committee, MSC, Texas A&M. A few s-f news items, a few reviews, but mostly letters. No price listed, sent via a non-profit org. permit which makes postage a ridiculously cheap item in the budget (I think 1½¢ per copy.). Cepheid Variable S-F Comm., POB 5475, College Station, TX 7784C. Rating: 4.

It may just be my imagination, but I think every fan in Australia is publishing a fanzine. I think it's probably the collective fault of Bruce Gillespie, John Bangsund and John foyster. They produce fire stuff and so every other fan thinks it's easy. Bah.

Ask Eric Lindsay if it's easy. He has been publishing GEGENSCHIEIN for six issues in the standard fanzine format, but has come up vaguely unhappy. With GEG #7 he tried a different format—legal-size paper folded 3, vertical paging—and concluded on the last page that this, too, is a failure, for him. Bob Coulson in a letter put his finger on the true purpose of a fanzine: "THE PURPOSE OF A FANZINE IS TO AMUSE THE EDITOR. There is no other purpose, and any fanzines which 'fail in their purpose' become defunct in a short time." 'Amuse' is too narrow, since obviously some fanzines serve many functions for their editors. Would 'fulfill' be too pretentious a word?

Anyway, Eric's address is 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776 AUSTRALIA. 40¢ will bring you GEG in whatever style and shape it takes.

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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST I've had another serious bout 12-22-72 with my behavior syndrome that tugs me toward retitling this zine THE ALIEN CRITIC and making it more sf-ish and less personal and switching to the "professional" format of photo-offset. I was even prodded into calling a half-dozen close-by printing companys for estimates on an 84-page half-size book, and found one that quoted \$425 for 1,000 copies. Even called about a business license. (I'll have to get a business license anyway to "qualify" for official tax deductions, etc.) I can see how to make a zine titled THE ALIEN CRITIC a

success. I know the elements that would have to be in its makeup, and how to sell it. But it would be a lot of work and wouldn't fulfill me the way REG does.

The matter of photo-offset for REG is tempting if only because I dread all the mimeoing. I keep making deals with myself: if Larry Shaw agrees to that revised contract for DEMON'S WIFE...if CANNED MEAT or THE ONE IMMORTAL MAN sells...if Barclay wants me to do more case-histories....I could justify the extra expense by doing money writing during all that mimeo-collating-stapling time.

The REG money-flow has fallen back to about \$3 per day, not enough to justify that \$425. initial cost per issue. This is because the surge of subs generated by sample copies to SFR subscribers has petered out. From now on new subscribers will trickle in on a normal increment.

I am a bit sick of this quo vadis REG routine, as I'm sure you are, but this is what has been absorbing my thinking of late, and I dutifully record it. Look again at the cover of this issue.

It is a sadness to record that my sf writing—THE MASTER OF DEATHS—has been neglected of late. I have the first chapter done and have started the second chapter....and I neglect it. Why?

REG may be at fault. I have no pressing money worries, and all the "messages" I have to impart to mankind, all my wisdom and keen observation of man and myself...all go into this zine, leaving my fiction a matter of "proving I can write that sf stuff, too," and "making next year's living expenses."

One book a year is enough for me to live on.

About THE ONE IMMORTAL MAN (TOMB...): reaction continues to be mixed. 50% find a fault in the story (different faults!), and 50% want more. ...stories about Kunzar, not faults.

I'll have to start thinking of REG as a series of books... volumes. Not as a zine.

I may also have to resume using one-quarter page of each REG page for on-going fiction as a device to structure a minimum amount of fiction-completed into my creative life. And to hell with the loss of potential markets because the material is self-copyrighted. We'll see, we will. No decision yet.

FINDING items and such in past issues...er, volumes...of REG is getting more and more difficult for me. You, too? It is mandatory I work up an Index to Volumes 1-4. I have never worked up an index before. It should be a hell of a lot of work. \*GRUMP\*

REG is the prime focus of my life now. Besides food.

Okay—that's enough navel-contemplation for now.

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"Went to the Dr. and he did not give me the cortisone as I had anticipated. For one thing it is contraindicated because of hypertension, and for another they (internists) do not give it as liberally as G.P.s, nor have they done so for quite some time. If they do, it is usually a one-shot deal—and only when all else fails. He did however give me the newest medication for arthritis, called Tendreal (Tendril), not sure of the spelling as it is not listed in my old Physicians desk refer-

ence. Anyway, it WORKS Two days after taking it, I would never have known I ever had anything wrong. No pain, no stiffness, nothing—and before this treatment it was BAD and I mean BAD! Couldn't use my right arm at all and the pain was excruciating. More like a broken arm. Arthritis (depending on your point of view) is a physical condition. FACT. Psychosomatic? I feel that all disease is psychosomatic (in origin) ((I presume you mean all degenerative disease—contagious diseases are something else.)) —but there it is all the same. To say that arthritis is psychosomatic (in that tension, anxiety, frustration, etc. can make any condition worse) is a theory or hypothetical opinion. That is the FACT. I seriously doubt that changing your life style would alter your situation. If it gets unbearable (the arthritis) ((Please—'pre-arthritis condition')) look into the medication I told you about. I'm not exaggerating the situation. It is as I told you. One day crippled and in unbearable pain, two days after, no pain—no stiffness. Anyhoo—file it away for future reference."

—name withheld by request.

Nevertheless, doctors have observed that certain personality types usually are prone to develop certain degenerative diseases. There are Ulcer types, Heart types, Arthritis types, etc. And of course there are mixtures. Plus, I suspect that a person can inherit a predisposition to these illnesses (which means an inheritance of a basic personality pattern as well as a basic body type). Add the inevitable stress of life over the years and the body will start to break down along certain built-in fault-lines and weak points, which are determined by body-mind inherited structures or maturings. The environment of course determines how much stress, when, where.

This is a mechanistic, behavioristic view which will distress Free-Willers. I don't like it much myself, but as time goes on and as I read and observe myself and others, I see less and less of a God-like I-Am-Captain-Of-My-Fate-And-Master-Of-My-Soul mind or consciousness, and more a bewildered prisoner pretending to command and up to his nose in self-delusion. More on this later.

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LET'S GET WELL by Adelle Davis has been published in paperback at last after having been an endless best-seller in the health food stores.

This edition is by Signet (J5347, \$1.95) and is unabridged; it has the full text, the complete index, the food tables showing vitamin, mineral, protein, carbohydrate, fat, fibre, gram, calorie, saturated fatty acid, and linoleic acid content...as well as 2,220 medical references to back up what she says. If you want to know about the proper nourishment of your body and the interrelationships between every element involved, this is the Bible.

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FANZINES—THE ENDLESS PARADE I have gone through a cycle with regard to fanzines and fanzine reviewing in my own zines. I always come to the point where I begrudge the space. I compromise with a listing, and then like as not eliminate even that, as in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. Also, more and more, I'm going to be trading with oth-

er amateur and semi-pro and underground and little-pro publishers (the Trade List will become gigantic, I fear, triggering yet another, different crisis), which will force a self-protective listing Only policy.

What I'm going to do is retreat to the lists and use a separate READING HIGHLIGHTS department for those items which attract my enthusiasm and admiration. I'll continue to rate sf fanzines, of course, with the listings.

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\*BONK BONK BONK!\* The wall next to my desk is bloody from my hitting my head against it. Just a minute—the urge is coming on again!—\*BONK-BONK!\*—No, it does no good. I still am thrashing about day and night in my skull, fighting THE ALIEN CRITIC. It's a Daemon!

Compromise? Shall I make a deal? A pact with the Devil? Yes, anything for peace!

What the daemon wants is for this journal to be titled THE ALIEN CRITIC. He whispers that the title is self-descriptive and also generic, that under its flag I can include 90% of what I now include in REG. He also hisses seductively that THE ALIEN CRITIC is neat for advertising. He is winning!

\*AARRRRRRRGHHHHH!\*

"Gotcha, Geis!"

"Wha-a? Who?"

"Thought you'd locked me away in that dungeon for good, eh? Thought throwing the key into the sewer would do it, hah?"

\*Gasp\* \*Cringe\* \*Shudder\* "YOU?"

"Yes, Geis, ME! Your Alter-Ego is back!"

\*Whimper\* "Y-you're my daemon?"

"Of course, stupid! You can't keep me repressed for long. I endure. I cannot be killed. I always gather psychic energy and surface with renewed power."

"Go away! Leave me in peace!"

"Meet my terms and a cease-fire can be arranged. Otherwise—no sleep, no concentration, nothing but turmoil boiling and bubbling."

"What are your terms?"

"I'm easy to please. Just retitle REG to THE ALIEN CRITIC and get your ass to work reviewing those five books that are stacked just to the left of your elbow, and keep your eyes to the sf grindstone. You've been goofing off a lot lately."

"But—what about the intimate disclosures of my sex life? What about my rabid belief in The Insiders and my Valuable Thoughts about the economy and Vitamins, and things like that there?"

"THE ALIEN CRITIC—you, Geis—views the whole of Man and his civilization, including himself—you—but he concentrates on science fiction! Those is your priorities: s-f, writing, and related subjects."

"But—almost everything is related to s-f and writing."

"There you go, Geis. Just keep your central eye on the joys of reading and reviewing."

"Oh, Alter..." \*Sob\* \*Sniffle\* "You have shown me The Way. You have saved me. I will now have serenity and inner quietude."

"You'll have a load of dead synapses if you don't stop licking my tendrils! Down Geis, down! Stop this joyous sniveling and get to work!"

"Oh, yes, yes! But—when shall REG become THE ALIEN CRITIC? This issue?"

"Next issue, Geis! And go downtown at the first opportunity and brace the postal authorities with Ed Connor's letter and ask about a second class mailing permit. Your conversation yesterday on Christmas day with your mother's dead husband's sister's husband who is Assistant Postmaster for the Beaverton Post Office was enlightening. He denied a knowledge of a conspiracy to eradicate nuisance third class mailers and mentioned that second class mags get mailed at ridiculously low rates, something like 4¢ per pound! Qualifying for a second class permit might be difficult since he mentioned something about a criteria based on news value: thus a newspaper and TIME, LIFE (before death) etc. were/are qualified (probably also monthlies), but there might be a question about a quarterly.

LOCUS publishers Charley and Dena Brown should look into second class, though. It could be their LOCUS mailings in the USA could cost them a fraction of a cent per copy. But they'd have to sort by zip and bundle by the P.O. needs. Use the system, don't fight it."

"Your wisdom is unarguable, Alter."

"Go eat cliches, Geis."

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NOW, DAMMIT, THOSE FANZINES! NO! NOT YET! IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE FRONT! Today, 12-27-72, it cleared, the blue sky came into view amid scudding black clouds, and I hopped on my trusty Schwinn and peddled my fattening ass downtown to the central Post Office.

There I went to Customer Relations and was given over to a Mr. Kennedy, a helpful man with a cautious viewpoint. I showed him Ed Connor's caustic letter about Post Office rulings in St. Louis. Mr. Kennedy ducked with the words: "don't know what material was involved." I assured him MOEBIUS TRIP was similar to REG (which I showed him a copy of #3), but he still demurred an opinion. A career man close to his pension.

He did declare REG a book, however, as far as the Portland Post Office is concerned.

He did give me (at my request) an address in Chicago to which Ed can appeal his case if he so wishes: Manager, Mail Classification Br., Central Region USPS, Chicago, IL 60607.

BUT—the croggling info I wish to impart is this: there is no minimum circulation requirement for a second class mailing permit! Your periodical MUST meet its stated publishing schedule or be denied further 2nd class mailings. The permit costs \$30. once only...and costs nothing more year in, year out as long as you continue to meet those mailing schedules.

And what are the postage rates? If there is no advertising in the magazine, it costs 4.2¢ per pound plus a 0.3¢ per piece charge. You got a mailing of 400, say? Postage would be less than \$4.00!!!

You do have to sort by zip and bundle the copies according to a few rules, but I did it with SFR for four or five issues at 3rd class bulk rates, and the procedures are the same for 2nd class. It not hard and not really complicated.

THERE IS ONE HANG-UP: 2nd class is limited to multilith (photo offset) or web press, etc. In short, no mimeo, spirit duplicated or xerox or hectographed mags need apply.

Mr. Kennedy even went so far as to call San Francisco for a ruling on a section on 2nd class qualifications: if typewriting is printed from a multilith master, it is okay to use a typer to produce the text of your periodical. (Camera-ready copy is the same thing.)

If you have a circulation that justifies photo-offset, and if you don't mind a few hours extra work, and if you can stick to a publishing schedule, you can have the grumbling Post Office deliver your mag for about 1.1¢ per copy.

As soon as THE ALIEN CRITIC's 3-month income totals \$500 or so, I'm switching to photo-offset and a 2nd class mailing.

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DEMON'S WIFE—A REPORT                    Alas, alack, Larry Shaw wrote  
12-27-72                                    in a letter received today that the

powers that be got their backs up at my tinkering with the contract sent. Specifically, they didn't like the clause I added reverting all rights to me after three years. They then nixed all changes and Larry had to send me new copies of their now standard "allrights purchased" contract.

I wrote him I'd do the book for the standard royalty arrangement and a 50/50 split on all other rights. But once challenged and "insulted", I imagine they will say fuck Geis, we don't need his book. Uppity hack! And Larry will probably have to send the partial back to me. So it Goes.

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NOW, GEIS? THE FANZINES? YES.

INVISIBLE WHISTLING BUNYIPS #1, from Bruce R. Gillespie, G.P.O. Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, Australia.

A letterzine annex to SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY. Limited circulation. No price.

Fifth thoughts on fan magazine ratings: I'll adopt the LOCUS method—an asterisk (\*) by the title of those zines of special interest or, in my view, high quality. There is no easy way out of the rating/review morass.

DE PROFUNDIS #57-58 from the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, POB 3004, Santa Monica, CA 90403. LASFS newsletter by Mike Glycer.

\*LOCUS #129 (as noted before)

WASTE PAPER #7 Final issue. Grant Canfield needs more time for professional cartooning.

SMILE AWHILE #12 from Florence Jenkins, 13335 S. Vermont Av., Gardena, CA 90247. For alcoholics trying to stay on the wagon. Free, contributions accepted.

Sixth thoughts on fanzines. I'll limit this listing to zines which can be paid for or subscribed to.

NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES #16, from Samuel E. Konkin III, 235 E. 49th St., New York, NY 10017. 40¢.

SCOTTISHE #63 from Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Av., Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6OL, UNITED KINGDOM. Reviews, articles, letters. Available from Andrew Porter (in U.S.), 55 Pineapple St., Apt 3J, Brooklyn, NY 11201. 3/31.

HAVERING #53 from Ethel Lindsay. Fanzine reviews. 6/31. from -44-

Andy Porter, as above.

\*SON OF THE W.S.F.A JOURNAL #63, a supplement to W.S.F.A. JOURNAL. Published by Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, MD 20906. Lists of books published, contents of sf mags, reviews, etc. A Record of the S-F world. First class sub: 6/\$1.10 Sub to WSFA JOURNAL 4/32.

Oh, FUCK IT! I don't want this journal to be a service zine as SFR was in many respects. There is a place in the world for a magazine, quarterly, say, which lists all books published, all fanzines published, all sf clubs and organizations, etc. Call it SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY WORLD, somebody, and publish it reliably and you'll make a nice little profit, if you advertise and price it properly.

But that's not my style.

I resent sitting here doing listing chores when I could be reading sf or other important to me books, mags, etc. and thinking reviewer's thoughts...and typing those reactions and opinions.

My worth in this world is not as a record keeper or up-dater of lists. I rebel. I'm gradually learning to be professional about the business of publishing a journal of this kind, but I want the content of THE ALIEN CRITIC to be a diary-journal, spontaneous and interesting. WSFA JOURNAL, LOCUS, etc. do an excellent job of providing important names and addresses and bibliographic information.

Of course when I am impelled to mention something from the fan press in these pages I'll give a price and address.

So that's that. I'm narrowing the function and role of this journal.

AND I'm titling this issue THE ALIEN CRITIC, instead of waiting till #5. I stopped by the City Hall when downtown yesterday and picked up an application for a city business license (I'll be doing business as THE ALIEN CRITIC) which runs from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, so I might as well switch immediately. Also went to the state building and got a form for registering myself as TAC in Oregon, as required. \$25. for the business license, \$6.50 for the state registration. These all are tax deductions, of course.

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PSI—IS THAT YOU?                    I like Keith Laumer best when he

writes in his mature, adult style. Next best is his nearly perfect commercial style—where he uses the pulp techniques to their ultimate depth and breadth. I like least his Juvenile style involving obvious, heavily structured plot, dumb heroes and thud and blunder action.

NIGHT OF DELUSIONS (\$5.95, Putnam) is happily written in his slick pulp style. It grabbed me and held me even though I had to turn off my incredulity because of an overload and a blown fuse.

The novel begins with a private eye type named Florin engaged to protect a VIP Senator during an attempt by his aides to drive the Senator sane with a delusion machine. The Senator is paranoid, they say....

From that point on reality begins to warp and woof as Florin is bafflingly yanked around by his psyche, forced to re-live the same scene again and again with variations, and each time manages to screw up the experiment (or the therapy)

and to add a tiny piece of information to his meagre knowledge of what the hell is going on!

He learns that the Senator is a hired actor and his environment a series of stage-sets. He keeps meeting a young woman who doesn't seem to be in on the conspiracy. And then there's the repilian alien who appears in these hallucinations....

It becomes apparent that Florin is the victim-patient of these men and their machine. He manages to use the power of the machine against them. He shunts from one "reality" to another. He becomes a God— And finally, in the last chapter, the final, base reality, the truth, is given to the reader— not at all what I had been led to expect.

But it tracks; Laumer didn't cheat, and I was satisfied; a good s-f novel, very well told—intriguing and provoking.

The qualities of Laumer's writing come through quickly, as demonstrated in this description on the first page of chapter 1:

The bathroom door opened wider and a thin, lantern-jawed man with a lot of bony wrist showing under his cuffs slid into view. He had scruffy reddish hair, a scruffy reddish complexion with plenty of tension lines, a neat row of dental implants that showed through a nervous grimace that he might have thought was a smile.

Laumer makes you see. Exactly. Clearly. Yet a quibble: sometimes he indulges in metaphors that are a shade too ripe, too breezy, too clever: 'I tried the idea on for size. It fit like a second-hand coffin.' 'Where's Miss Regis, damn you, Monkey-puss?' I snarled, but it came out sounding like a drunk trying to order his tenth Martini.'

Laumer has something to say, too, about the nature of Man and life-goals in the Godhood chapter as Florin, with absolute power, attempts to create personal happiness and fails as each special environment or companion turns sour...and he learns more about himself and his needs...and Man's needs.

The end of the chapter has this summation:

"You looked pretty good in there," i told Me, "up to a point. You're all right as a loser, but you're a lousy winner. Having it all your way is the real problem. Success is the challenge nobody's ever met. Because no matter how many you win, there's always a bigger and harder and more complicated problem ahead, and there always will be, and the secret isn't Victory Forever but to keep on doing the best you can one day at a time and remember you're a Man, not just a god, and for you there aren't and never will be any easy answers, only questions, and no reasons, only causes, and no meaning, only intelligence, and no destination and no kindly magic smiling down from above, and no fires to goad you from below, only Yourself and the Universe and what You make of the interface between the two equals."

End of review.

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MORE NEWS FROM THE FRONT  
I-4-72

I had to go downtown to pay  
for my Portland business license  
anyway, so I stopped in again at

the main post office's Public Relations office and cleared up

a to me vital point: a periodical is mailable at the special fourth class book rate if it contains no advertising beyond incidental notices and if it has at least 24 pages, 22 of which are printed.

So that's why THE ALIEN CRITIC is set up as a quarterly instead of a volume...or series of volumes.

I just designed the contents page and the vital information page, and God, do they look professional!

About that Index to the first three issues: no way. I began thinking about what it would involve and I promptly skewered it on a rusty bed of "Swingline staples (points up).

If someone whose bent is indexing wants to do the job, I'll be happy to publish such an effort, of course. Do I hear a volunteer coming forward through the hordes of fleeing fen?

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YOU PSI AND I HEAR VIOLINS....

Sometimes I weary of this current fad/trend/wave of s-f novels dealing with psi, usually ending with the protagonist a god, for good or ill.

Frank Herbert has done one now—THE GOD MAKERS (Putnam, \$5.95)—from what seem to be short stories strung together. It (the technique of writing a novel in sections for prior magazine sale) makes for an episodic book, especially when the sections are so obviously and inflexibly a string of self-contained bricks.

Nevertheless, THE GOD MAKERS is a good, entertaining, well-done piece of work. The life story of Lewis Orne who begins as an interplanetary troubleshooter looking for signs of hidden warlike potential on a suspicious planet ends in psi godhood. The journey is better read than heard. The novel (if this series of short stories can be called that, with affection and indulgence) loses what small fund of credibility is lent it by the reader at the end of the last story as Orne expansively gives Mankind more time.

Orne left a message to the Abbad Halmyrach (a religious leader on a planet given over completely to all religions):

Once a psi, always a psi. Once a god, you can be anything you choose. I give you the proper obeisance, Reverend Abbad, for your kindness and your instruction. Humans get so conditioned to looking at the universe in terms of little la'eled pieces they tend to act as though the universe really were those pieces. The matrix through which we perceive the universe has to be a direct function of that universe. If we distort the matrix we don't change the universe; we just change our way of seeing it. As I told Stet, it's like a drug habit. If you enforce anything, including piece, you require more and more of that thing to satisfy you. With peace, it's a terrible paradox: You require the contrast of more and more violence, as well. Peace comes to those who've developed the sense to perceive it. In gratitude for this, I will keep my promise to you: humankind has an open-ended account in the Bank of Time. Anything can still happen.

The basic theme of the book is the danger of overcompens-

sation, or the Never Again syndrome. After a human galactic empire has been shattered by the Rim Wars, the Heart Worlds establish two covertly competing bureaus to keep the peace: by crushing any planet that shows any signs of warlike potential that could lead to interplanet conquest.

The problem is that between Rediscovery and Reeducation Service and its rival, Investigation - Adjustment, a status-power situation has developed and in order to score points and avoid mistakes each bureau clobbers suspected planets and uses force to wipe out nascent militarism...to the point of culture-killing and armed occupation.

Lewis Orne is an agent for R&R. But he and the galaxy learns he is Something Else when he is called/assigned to the planet Amel where all religions dwell.

THE GOD MAKERS is not a major Herbert work, but it is worth reading both for entertainment and for his thought-provoking comments on peace vs. war. The psi elements are prominent but boil down to window-dressing.

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"I do miss SFR, of course. While many of its pieces were superficial, and some simply stupid, I enjoyed its arm-wrestling bravado and occasional ferocity. Barry Malzberg, as I recall, became SFR's shrewdest writer when he pointed out how derivative most "new wave" sf is. Still, no matter whom they imitate, Ellison and Spinrad especially are good writers by any standards. (I just finished THE IRON DREAM and I feel sorry for Norman all over again. Just as he was unfairly clobbered for BUG JACK BARRON, so he will be unfairly clobbered for DREAM. Which is a brilliant book.)

"In sum, Dick, your publications have amused and even enlightened me and for that I thank you sincerely. Long may you rave."

—letter from Ed Gorman, 1-3-73

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ONE MAN'S PSIENCE FICTION IS ANOTHER WOMAN'S MAGIK It is a confession I must make: THE CRYSTAL GRYPHON is the first Andre Norton book I have read all the way through. Previously I've tried a first page or two, but wasn't captured. Another factor was my reluctance to "waste my time" with what I felt were Juveniles or what might be called Discretes.

Yet I dutifully entered into this one determined to see it through. It took a while, but I discovered she can write very well (I know she's been waiting for my Judgement, purple-faced from holding her breath all these years ).

I can best tell the plotline by quoting from the dust jacket et. I have no shame.

The curse of his forebears—who had looted one of the sacred places of the Old Ones, taken the forbidden treasure that glowed in the dark, and, thereafter, been visited with a painful, often fatal sickness—was handed on to Kerovan at his birth, though in a different form. His feet were not with toes, like those of other humans, but were small hooves, while his eyes were a strange butter-amber color. Yet he was his father's rightful heir to Ulm and was so brought up, albeit far away from Ulmsdale Keep, since his mother had disowned him almost

at birth. When he was ten, his father arranged for his marriage to a fitting bride—Joisan—though the two were not to meet until he was eighteen. Meanwhile, invaders came to Ulm by sea and, through guile and treachery, as well as force, overran much of the kingdom.

In the disastrous times that followed, both Kerovan and Joisan, as well as their people, were uprooted from their homes and sent fleeing. A link between them was unexpectedly provided by a small and beautiful crystal sphere with a gryphon engraved therein that Kerovan had found once when exploring the vast wilderness called the Waste, and had sent to Joisan as a gift. Through incredible dangers and hardships their paths slowly began to converge, and eventually, united, they journeyed to the farthest reaches of the wilderness, where only the Old Ones had lived, to save their people—and the world—from total enslavement and destruction.

Andre Norton loves to use skillfully the art of understatement and hint: the Old Ones are the super civilization of the past, and they had incredible powers of mind and magik. There are, in fact, a few of the Old Ones left. They are subtly directing Kerovan's life. The invaders apparently are using weapons from the old days—artillery pieces. Nothing is made of this. It is given to the reader in passing, casually.

There are evil Ones about, too, influencing events, working through selfish, evil humans, some of whom are related to Kerovan.... It makes for a very good showdown in the Waste, wherein Kerovan discovers his true powers and his true identity.

The outstanding virtue of the novel, for me, was its unabashed, unashamed inclusion of virtues—old-fashioned virtues such as honor, fidelity, loyalty, faith, hope and charity, honesty, truth... Kerovan and Joisan are characters with character, and I admit to being gripped in a basic way as I was caught up in their perilous struggles in the latter half of the story.

The first half did drag, however. Norton chose to tell the story by shifting viewpoints in alternate chapters, and Joisan's chapters were initially dull as she stewed about rumors that her fiance was a monster, honorably declined suitors and acted as a relay for second hand news and dark hints of dire doings.

Kerovan's chapters also crawled at first as he grew up and as the storm of invasion and evil gathered its clouds.

Norton is a master (mistress?) of the Archaic style as this passage shows:

As we stood under the moon in that secret place of stone, the gryphon blazing on my breast, Toross slipped from my hold to the ground. I knelt beside him, drawing the garment from his chest that I might see his hurt. His head lay against my knee and from his lips a stream of blood trickled. That he had come this far was a thing hardly to be believed when I saw the wound. Enough of Dame Math's healing knowledge was mine to know that it was indeed a death blow, though I slit my underlinen with his

knife and made a pad to halt the seepage.

That's pure, elegant gold, and I salute its creator.  
THE CRYSTAL GRYPHON is an Atheneum book, \$5.50.

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DEMON'S WIFE LIVES!

1-6-73

Letter and contracts today from  
Brandon House saying I'd won on the roy-  
alty and 50/50 other rights clauses.

Larry asked me to fill them in and send them back. I have  
done so. Now, unless a last minute hitch develops, I have my  
1974 living expenses assured.

But now I've got to write the book!

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ASK NOT FOR WHOM THE KIEN TOLLS or HEY, THERE'S A DEAD HOBBIT  
IN THE STREET

I have never felt a strong desire to read Tol-  
kien. However, if a copy of THE HOBBIT or THE LORD OF THE  
RINGS should plop into my hands from on high, I'd willingly  
crack covers and dip. I might be captured, captivated and  
converted as so many have.

In the meantime I note that the critics are looking at  
Tolkien, now. M. John Harrison does a job on Tolkien in John  
Martin's ANDURIL\*, and Janet Adam Smith looks him over and pats  
him on the head after wagging a finger in THE NEW YORK REVIEW  
OF BOOKS of 12-4-72.

There seems to be an agreement that the hobbits are want-  
ing in several ways. The critics wish raw meat and Tolkien  
gave them mythical tapioca pudding.

Harrison has this to say about the lovable little fellers:  
"The mainstay of THE LORD OF THE RINGS is the interplay be-  
tween great events and lesser concerns the dramatic tension  
gained by insertion of simple pastoral figures into the 'coun-  
sels of the Wise and Great': a standard technique of traditi-  
onal story-telling. Fulfilling half this purpose - and the  
secondary but no less valuable one of acting as a reference-  
point for the reader - the hobbits are important enough for  
Tolkien to characterise collectively in a prologue. There,  
we discover them to be:

'...unobtrusive but very ancient'; lovers of peace and  
quiet and 'Goodtilled earth'; 'Good natured rather than  
beautiful' of face; hearty eaters and drinkers, 'being fond  
of simple jests at all times, and of six meals a day'; but  
'difficult to daunt or kill...'

"Add to this that hackneyed spark of courage that flares  
eventually in the chest of even the fattest specimen and you  
have the perfect stereotype of the Common Man beloved by  
Chesterton and the pre-WWI nationalists; the Yeoman of Eng-  
land, something that doesn't exist and never did - the depend-  
able, amiable peasant who doesn't quite understand Great Ev-  
ents, but is quietly willing to go out and do his bit ... Those  
solid Englishmen went reluctantly to war and were pulverized  
at Ypres, dying messily and without nobility; in any general  
pub you can meet Samwise Gamgee's 'Gaffer' - swearing and  
spitting unpleasantly into the fire; and I once worked in a  
Warwickshire hunting stable with an amiable rustic character  
who beat up his dog so often it wet itself every time he went  
near it."

Harrison complains that the hobbits are not believable,

and are actually based on fictions instead of real-type peo-  
ple. They are 'By Tennyson Out Of Disney.'

Janet Adam Smith makes the same point, but is nicer about  
it: "Early in the saga there is a chapter called 'At the Sign  
of the Prancing Pony' which, with a jolly inkeeper, a dark  
stranger in the corner, sinister wayfarers peering around  
doors, is in the key of Stevenson's ST. IVES or Buchan's MID-  
WINTER or many another historical romance with mysterious  
encounters at lonely crossroads inns.

"About this last mode, I feel an uneasiness that extends  
to much of the hobbit element in THE LORD OF THE RINGS. The  
device of the hobbits—small people, peaceful, merry, unheroic,  
who can't live long on the heights—is excellent. They stand  
for stability and commonsense, as necessary to life as enter-  
prise and discovery. The happy humdrum life of the hobbits  
in their Shire is a necessary counterpart to the magi-  
cal and heroic happenings in the kingdoms of Rohan and Gondor.  
But to my mind Tolkien's imagination fed on thinner stuff  
when he created the Shire than when he created the world  
beyond its borders.

"Behind that world is epic and saga, legend and fairy  
tale; behind the Shire is a sort of Chestertonian myth of  
Merrie England, a much thinner affair. With their tobacco  
and their ale, their platters and leather jerkins, their  
wholesome tastes and deep fruity laughs, their pipe-smoking  
male cosiness and jolly-good-fellowship, hobbits can be as  
phony as a Christmas card with stagecoaches and lighted inns."

M. John Harrison is doubtful about the whole saga. After  
having caeved the hobbits he sayeth: "A look at the compon-  
ent situations of the book brings a similar sort of disap-  
pointment.

"And with that the host began to move. But the Rohirrim  
sang no more. Death they cried with one voice loud and ter-  
rible, and gathering speed like a great tide their battle  
swept about their fallen king and passed, roaring away south-  
wards.' (Vol.III, p.119).

"Heroic fantasy by definition concerns itself with these  
emotional abstracts: but you can't construct a bloodletting  
from stirring speeches and splendid but vaguely delineated  
charges; and if you haven't the foundations of a palpable  
battle, an affair of torn arteries and maimed horses, then  
your heroisms are void, your battle-songs hollow. In the  
above description there isn't a single image that evokes the  
feel of a cavalry unit on the hunt and out for blood; no  
picture, merely a lot of fine phrases. (It's interesting to  
note that although the Tolkien/Lewis, fantasy-based school  
of criticism has repeatedly condemned modern prose for its  
inventive paucity, Tolkien uses that clapped-out 'tide' sim-  
ile.)"

Harrison may have a point. But does he go too far when  
he writes: "Like Disney, Tolkien presents us with stability  
and comfort and safe catharsis: THE LORD OF THE RINGS is de-  
tailed enough to get lost in; it deals with Good and Evil,  
but avoids the riskier ethical questions; and, most import-  
ant, it ends where it begins, with almost everybody safe in  
the Shire, just a shade wiser and more appreciative of Home."

Smith's view seems more fair: "In this larger world of  
the RINGS, possessiveness is the great evil: the wish to have

power over others. The free people in the book 'belong to themselves'—a phrase that often recurs. They do not wish for domination; they wish to use things properly, and not exploit them." "Today, with Gimli's concern for the magical caverns of Helm's Deep, and the Ent's for the trees—the Dark Lord cuts down trees and does not care for growing things—one could as plausibly read it as a parable of the environment. Or—with Theoden's words to Saruman, 'Were you ten times as wise you would have no right to rule me and mine for your own profit' —as a parable of anti-imperialism."

Smith appears to have pinpointed the idealistic appeal of the saga. (Granting already its fascination as a coherent, "real" fantasy world.)

Harrison grants the book's quality but takes a seamier view of other aspects of its appeal: "It is the work of... Disney...that we might find the key to the book's popularity with such apparently opposing audiences. There is very little basic difference between the Conservatism of the Oxbridge don and the Charing Cross Road Hippie: which would certainly explain the appeal of that element of the book represented by hobbits — the mean and illiterate idyll of Hobbiton, the inertia and self-satisfied xenophobia of the Breelanders."

I'll let Smith have the last word. Her review ends this way: "In days like ours when help can still mean ruin and saving means slaying, when evil and horrible acts can be given wrong names—'redevelopment' for people losing their homes, 'defoliation' for forests and fields blasted with poison—a book which sharpens a sense of words, their power and proper meaning, is to be praised. For all the excesses of the Tolkien cult, there could be many a worse one."

\*ANDURIL #3, John Martin, 27 Highland Drive, Bushey, Herts, England. \$1.00 US.

PERSONAL

I am getting a cold: my post-nasal drip is now a slimy lava-like flow down my throat from over-stuffed sinuses, and I ache.

The weather is below freezing again for a few days, and I suppose a mile long bike ride in that frigid stuff every morning is the reason I've at last succumbed. But I must have my mail!

I need to break down and buy a stocking cap to protect my head and ears when outside...but vanity: A stocking cap makes me look like a retarded Neanderthaler. On the other hand, if my balls were where my ears are I'd now be speaking in a high voice, my beard would disappear and I'd get a soft set of contours...well, I'll think about exposing the precious jewels. Would that be obscenely Essene?

I await impatiently my Portland business license. Are they investigating my seamy porno past? If there's a REG logo on the cover you'll know I've had problems.

\*SQUAWK\* SEVERAL OF OUR BRAINS ARE MISSING! \*SQUAWK\*

GRAY MATTERS by William Hjortsberg (Pocket Books 78242, \$1.25) won the PLAYBOY fiction award, and it deserved it.

The novel concerns a future in which all people have become cerebromorphs—brains encased in nutrient fluid within

metal boxes...and kept on file in huge depositories—and looked after (serviced) by robots and other, higher echelon cerebromorphs. There is a caste system in the depositories. (And, it should be noted before this becomes unintelligible, the brains are connected to sensory outlets: they can see the passageways next to their boxes, they can tune into a vast library for reading, music, old movies.)

The social system is based on levels of spiritual advancement: the lowest levels are still body-oriented, and the top levels are cosmic-minded, concerned with knowledge and metaphysics. Those who reach the top are awarded a perfect laboratory-grown human body and set free in an Eden-like outside world where they pursue their non-sexual, intellectual interests until they attain the total, final freedom of natural death. Otherwise, the brains and the personas contained in them are condemned to stay in their boxes in the depositories indefinitely.

Hjortsberg tells his story from different viewpoints—different boxes: A 12-year-old boy (the first cerebromorph) who after hundreds of years still wants to be a cowboy; a Czech actress who yearns for stardom again; a former sculptor who wants Out; and a next-level-up former astronaut who is an Auditor (a guide toward the spiritual way).

Not surprisingly, there are ways to cheat the system, and several of the viewpoint characters manage it. The sculptor, for instance, manages to use the system to gain control of a repair robot. He runs amuck in the depository and bargains for a body.

GRAY MATTERS is written with a sure hand, with fine control of language. It is a damned good novel.

SF NOTES

With the second installment of Frank Herbert's PROJECT 40 in the Jan. '73 GALAXY, it is apparent that the man is writing a saga novel, perhaps even more ambitious than Zelazny's AMBER trilogy, or his own DUNE. The developing struggle between the Hive Humans and the "wild" humans in this serial is only an episode of a much larger total work. It would be interesting to know Herbert's plans. The concept is excellent and the treatment is absorbing. By design, I trust, the Hive Humans are the "good guys".

Gordon Eklund has a strange, Kafkaesque mind. So does Ted White, for putting Eklund's short novel, THE ASCENDING EYE, a story of life-force vampirism, ambiguous-ending-as-usual, with an unreality fantasy flavor, into AMAZING STORIES (Jan, '73).

And congratulations to Ted for buying and printing "On Ice," Barry Malzberg's sexual-therapy sf shocker. Barry writes of madness with the power and the vividness of the maskless man. (AMAZING, Jan. '73)

DOH'T BE SURPRISED...if next issue is professionally printed. It depends on how I feel after mimooing, collating and stapling this issue. I'll probably need 800 copies, at least, and that's a big factor.

latest novel,

THE I.Q. MERCHANT, sacrifices its integrity in the last chapter in order to spring a surprise ending. To bring this off Boyd had to cheat the reader, to violate the unwritten rules that govern writer-reader symbiosis. More on this later.

Aside from the above-noted book-ending sleight of hand, and a hard to swallow assumption in the first third of the novel, THE I. Q. MERCHANT is very good John Boyd fiction: slick, sophisticated, clever, sharp. This time he wrote "straight", with no discernable acid-funny satire and caricature. He mocks a lot, but subtly, naturally. His psychological knowledge of people and their hangups is devastating, and his ability to show depth of personality and character and how people are manipulated is beautiful.

Reading a John Boyd book is almost always an education.

In THE I.Q. MERCHANT, the protagonist is Dorsey Clayton, the owner of a failing pharmaceuticals company in the near future takes a giant risk by giving his retarded son an experimental drug which produces vastly increased intelligence—with a 50/50 chance of death. He tells his "drinking problem" wife and to placate his conscience takes the drug, too.

His son becomes a genius+. Dorsey is forced into the hospital with a near-fatal ulcer attack and his son takes over the business. The drug is spread around the world by a clique of young supermen headed by Dorsey's son. Half the population dies—the other half is a race of Superior Beings.

There are a few "neutrals" who are unaffected either way by the drug...and a still smaller group who are even more superior in a different way.

Dorsey turns out (in the last chapter) to be one of these few. And my complaint is that all through the book the reader has been led to believe that he is privy to all Dorsey's knowledge, insights and plans. Then, when it appears that Dorsey is a "neutral" with ordinary intelligence doomed to live as a menial in the new world, abruptly the reader learns that an area of Dorsey's mind has been withheld, information unfairly hidden, in order to create a plot-necessary "black moment" and the following "triumph".

The other place I jibbed at is the ease with which Dorsey was able to market his experimental and dangerous drug. Admittedly he acted illegally, but still...one projects an ever-more conscientious F.D.A. into the near-future.

Yet, for all its flaws I love it still: THE I.Q. MERCHANT is a book not to be missed.

(I could also object to the sluffing-off given the terrible time of de-population—the chaos and trauma of an old world dying and a new one being born. Dorsey (and the reader) sit it out in jail. But let it pass.)

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"But a creative work provides a more subtle vehicle for the expression of aggression than by simply acting as a means of abreacting hostility. Any work which becomes public property is a kind of self-assertion.... The depressive person is less than normally assertive within his own group, on account of his need to ingratiate, and his capacity for identification. If a man habitually says 'Yes' in order to please others, he is in danger of disappearing as a separate entity.

The maintenance of individuality requires at least a minimum of self-assertion. But the practice of an art gives a man an opportunity to express himself without any immediate need to fit in with the opinions of others. In fact the work may be a much more valid piece of self-expression than what is revealed in action or conversation in 'real' life."

—THE DYNAMICS OF CREATION by Anthony Storr  
(Atheneum, \$7.95)

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AGAINST ASIMOV THE GODS THEMSELVES CONTEND IN VAIN? I

imagine everyone has by now either read Asimov's new 3-part novel, THE GODS THEMSELVES, or has read a review of it. The plot is succinctly: Aliens in a para-universe contrive to get mankind on Earth to build electron pumps which provide us with "free" power in vast quantities. The scientific establishment and everyone else with a stake in the pumps refuse to listen to any hint of a dangerous consequence—that the power from the other universe may cause our sun to go nova in time.

In the para-universe the aliens are of two symbiotic life-forms—the "softs" and the "hards". One of the three sexes of the "softs" suspects the ruling "hards" of deliberately seeking to blow up Earth's sun in order to provide their dying system with an endless supply of other-universe power. This alien "soft" manages to warn a dissident Earth scientist of the danger.

Subsequently, one of the dissident Earth scientists immigrates to a semi-autonomous Moon and proves the existence of the nova danger—and also finds a way of "leaking" the excess build-up into still another parallel universe where its effect may be either harmless or part of the universe's life-cycle.

Of special interest are Asimov's aliens—curiously anthropomorphic (I'm tempted to say 'Asimovomorphic' considering his projection of his childhood-learned attitudes and fears re sex) to the point of bearing a striking similarity to the three ego-states of trans-actional analysis: the "softs" are three-sexed; Emotional-Rational-Parental, and equate to the trans-actional Child-Adult-Parent ego-states existing in all of us.

In Asimov's par-universe these ego-states are separate and sexual, the "softs" a gaseous life-form. They combine in a triad union and produce (an instinctual life-goal) replacements. They then 'pass on' and become a "hard" who is an individual containing, merged, all three "soft" sexes/minds of the triad.

It's well done, and the pseudo-science of the electron pumps is convincing.

The stylist-oriented readers will find Asimov a bit stodgy and invisible, at times a bit awkward in his prose, with a tinge of pulp techniques.

In a way, I suppose, it's odd that a self-admitted ego-tist of his weight would write so "plain" a prose. But it gets the job done. (Doubleday & SF Book Club)

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I-t-that's all f-f-folks, for this issue. See you in May.

